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THE CROSS ON THE SNOW MOUNTAINS.—A
SCANDINAVIAN TALE.

CHAPTER I.

A SHIP, a rude, pine-built vessel, lay tossing, and heaving, and tempest-driven, on a southern sea. Brave, wild-looking Norsemen were on her deck, breasting the storm, and controlling the ship with a desperate strength and almost ferocious energy, which, in those early days, stood in the place of skill. For it was in the time of Europe's stormy, unfettered youth, when civilization was just dawning in those of its climes which were nearest the sun. But the ship came from the north, the wild and savage north; her pine timbers had once rocked to the tempests in a Scandinavian forest, and afterwards, winter by winter, had struggled with the ice-bound waters of Scandinavian seas. It was the ship of a Viking.

The vessel seemed struggling between the sea and sky. The leaden, low clouds almost rested on her topmost masts, as if to press her down into the boiling deep; the storm-spirits howled above her—the waves answered the roar from beneath. And in the ship there was one faint, wailing cry, which made that wild chorus the birth-hymn of a human soul.

The mother, the young mother of an hour, lay unconscious of all the turmoil around her. With the angel of birth came the angel of death; already the shadow of his wings was upon her. The Viking sat at her feet, still, stern, immovable. Perhaps he now felt how it was that the fair southern flower, stolen and forcibly planted on a cold, northern rock, had withered so soon. He sat with his gray head resting on his rough, wrinkled hands, his cold, blue eyes, beneath their shaggy brows, looking with an iron-bound, tearless, terrible grief, upon the death-white face of his young spouse.

The nurse laid the babe on a silken cushion at his feet.

"Let my lord look upon his son, his heir. This is a joyful day for the noble Jarl Hjalmar. Praise be to Odin; ah, it is a blessed day!"

The Viking's eye turned to the child, and then back again to the mother, and a slight quivering agitated the stern lips.

"A blessed day, Ulva, sayest thou, and she—"

A gesture and a glance, half of scorn and half of hatred, showed how the Norsewoman felt towards the desolate southern maid, who had become the Viking's bride. Ulva expressed, in the metaphorical poetry of her country, what she dared not say in plain language.

"There was a poor, frail, southern flower, and under the shadow of its leaves sprang up a seedling pine. What mattered it that the flower withered, when the noble pine grew? Was it not glory enough to have sheltered the young seed, and then died! What was the weak southern plant compared to the stately tree—the glory of the north? Let it perish. Why should my lord mourn!"

At this moment a low wail burst from the newborn babe. The sound seemed to pierce like an arrow of light through the mist of death-slumber that was fast shrouding the young mother. Her marble fingers fluttered, her eyes opened, and turned with an imploring gaze towards the nurse, who had taken in her arms the moaning child.

"She asks for the babe—give it," muttered the father.

But the hard, rigid features of Ulva showed no pity.

"I guard my lord's child," she said; "his young life must not be perilled by the touch of death."

The mother's eyes wandered towards her husband with a mute, agonized entreaty, that went to his heart.

"Give me the child," his strong voice thundered, unmindful of the terror which convulsed every limb of that frail, perishing form. He laid the babe on her breast, already cold, and guided the feeble, dying hands, until they wrapped it round in a close embrace.

"Now, Clotilde, what wouldst thou?—speak!" he said, and his voice grew strangely gentle.

Then the strength of a mother's heart conquered even death for a time. Then Jarl's wife looked in her lord's face, and spoke faintly.

"Ulva said truly—I die. It was not for me to see again my sunny land. But my lord was kind to bear me thither once more, though it is too late. I had rather sleep under the soft billows that wash against the shores of my own land, than beneath the northern snows; they have frozen my heart. Not even thou canst warm it, my babe, my little babe!"

The Viking listened without reply. His face was turned away, but his strong, muscular hands were clenched, until the blue veins rose up like knots. At that moment he saw before him, in fancy, a young captive maiden, who knelt at his feet, and clasped his robe, praying that he would send her back to her own southern home. Then he beheld a pale woman, the wife of a noble Jarl, with the distinctive chain on her neck, a golden-fettered slave. And both wore the same face, though hardly so white and calm, as the one that drooped over the young babe, with the mournful

lament—"They have frozen my heart; they have frozen my heart!"

And Hjalmar felt that he had bestowed the Jarl's coronet and the nuptial ring with a hand little less guilty than if it had been a murderer's.

"Clotilde," whispered he, "thou and I shall never meet more, in life or after. Thou goest to the Christian heaven—I shall drink mead in the Valhalla of my fathers. Before we part, forgive me if I did thee wrong, and say if there is any token by which I may prove that I repent."

The dying mother's eyes wandered from her child to its father, and there was in them less of fear and more of love than he had ever seen.

"Hjalmar," she murmured, "I forgive—forgive me, too. Perhaps I might have striven more to love thee; but the dove could not live in the sea-eagle's nest. It is best to die. I have only one prayer—take my babe with thee to my own land; let him stay there in his frail childhood, and betroth him there to some bride who will make his nature gentle, that he may not regard, with the pride and scorn of his northern blood, the mother to whom his birth was death."

"I promise," said the Viking, and he lifted his giant sword to swear by.

"Not that; not that!" cried the young mother, as, with desperate energy, she half rose from her bed. "I see blood upon it—my father's my brethren's. O, God! not that."

A superstitious fear seemed to strike like ice through the Jarl's frame. He laid down the sword, and took in his giant palm the tiny hand of the babe.

"This child shall be a token between us," he said, hoarsely. "I swear by thy son and mine to do all thou askest. Clotilde, die in peace."

But the blessing was wafted after an already parted soul.

Ulva started up from the corner where she had crouched, and took the child. As she did so she felt on its neck a little silver cross, which the expiring mother had secretly contrived to place there—the only baptism Clotilde could give her babe. Ulva snatched it away, and trampled on it.

"He is all Norse now, true son of the Vikingir. Great Odin; dry up in his young veins every drop of the accursed stranger's blood, and make him wholly the child of Hjalmar!"

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Another birth-scene. It was among the vine-covered plains of France, where, at the foot of a feudal castle, the limpid Garonne flowed. All was mirth, and sunshine, and song, within and without. Of Charlemagne's knights, there was none braver than Sir Loys of Aveyran. And he was rich, too; his vineyards lay far and wide, outspread to the glowing sun of southern France—so that the minstrels who came to celebrate the approaching birth, had good reason to hail the heir of Sir Loys of Aveyran. An heir it must be, all felt certain, for the knight had already a goodly train of four daughters, and orisons innumerable

had been put up to the Virgin and all the saints, that the next might be a son.

It must be a son—for the old nurse of Sir Loys, a strange woman, who, almost dead to this world, was said to peer dimly into the world beyond, had seen a vision, of a young, armed warrior, climbing snow-covered hills, leading by the hand a fair, spirit-like maiden, while the twain between them bore a golden cross, the device of Sir Loys; and the mother-expectant had dreamed of a beautiful boy's face, with clustering amber hair, and beside it appeared another less fair, but more feminine—until at last both faded, and fading, seemed to blend into one. Thereupon the nurse interpreted the two visions as signifying that at the same time would be born, in some distant land, a future bride for the heir.

At last, just after sunset, a light arose in the turret window—a signal to the assembled watchers that one more being was added to earth. The child was born.

Oh, strange and solemn birth-hour, when God breathes into flesh a new spark of his divinity, and makes unto himself another human soul! A soul, it may be, so great, so pure, so glorious, that the whole world acknowledges it to come from God; or, even now confessing, is swayed by it as by a portion of the divine essence. Oh, mysterious instant of a new creation—a creation greater than that of a material world!

The shouts rose up from the valleys, the joy-fires blazed on the hills, when the light in the turret was suddenly seen to disappear. It had been dashed down by the hand of Sir Loys, in rage that Heaven had only granted him a daughter. Poor unwelcome little wailer! whose birth brought no glad pride to the father's eye, no smile even to the mother's pale lips. The attendants hardly dared to glance at the helpless innocent, who lay uncared-for and unregarded. All trembled at the stormy passions of the knight, and stealing away, left the babe alone. Then Ulrika, the old German nurse, came and stood before her foster-son, with his little daughter in her arms.

"Sir Loys," she said, "God has sent thee one more jewel to keep; give unto it the token of joyful acceptance, the father's kiss."

But Sir Loys turned away in bitter wrath.

"It is no treasure; it is a burthen—a curse! Woman, what were all thy dreams worth? Where is the noble boy which thou and the Lady of Aveyran saw? Fools that ye were! And I, too, to believe in such dreaming."

There came a wondrous dignity to the German woman's small, spare, age-bent form, and a wild enthusiasm kindled in her still lustrous eyes.

"Shamed be the lips of the Knight of Aveyran, when such words come from them. The dreams which Heaven sends, Heaven will fulfil. Dare not thou to cast contempt on mine age, and on this young bud, fresh from the hands of angels, which Heaven can cause to open into a goodly flower. Doubt not, Sir Loys, the dream will yet come true."

The knight laughed derisively, and was about to leave the apartment; but Ulrika stood in his way. With one arm she held the little one close to her breast—the other she raised with imperious gesture, that formed a strange contrast to her shrunken, diminutive figure. The knight, strong and stalwart as he was, might have crushed her like a worm on his pathway, and yet he seemed to quail before the indomitable and almost supernatural resolve that shone in her eyes.

"Ulrika, I have spoken—take away the child, and let me go," he said; and his tones sounded more like entreaty than command.

But the woman still confronted him with her wild, imperious eyes, beneath which his own sank in confusion. She—that frail creature, who seemed to need but a breath from death's icy lips to plunge her into the already open tomb—she ruled him as mind rules matter, as the soul commands the body. Loys of Aveyran, the bravest of Charlemagne's knights, was like a child before her.

"What wouldst thou, Ulrika?" he said at last.

She pointed to the babe, and, obeying her imperative gesture, the father stooped down, and signed its forehead with the sign of the cross. At the touch of the mailed fingers, the little one lifted up its voice in a half-subdued cry.

"Ave Mary!" said the knight, in disgust; "it is a puny, wailing imp. If Heaven has, indeed, sent it, Heaven may take it back again—for there are daughters enough in the house of Aveyran. This one shall be a nun—'t is fit for nothing else."

"Shame on thee, sacrilegious man!" cried Ulrika, indignantly.

But the knight left her more swiftly than ever he had fled from a foe. The aged nurse threw herself on her knees before a rude image of the Virgin, at whose feet she laid the child—

"Oh! holy Mother," she prayed, "let not the dreams and visions of the night be unfulfilled. I believe them—I only of all this house. For my faith's sake, give to this innocent that glorious destiny which, with prophetic eye, I saw. The world casteth her out—take her, O Mother, into thy sacred arms, and make her pure, and meek, and holy, like thyself. I go the way of all the earth; but thou, O Blessed One, into thy arms I give this maid."

When Ulrika rose up, she saw that her petition had not been offered in solitude. Another person had entered the turret chamber. It was a young man—the counterpart of herself in the small, spare form, yellow face, and wild, dark eyes. He wore a dress half lay, half clerical, and his whole appearance was that of one immersed in deep studies, and almost oblivious of the ordinary affairs of life.

"Mother, is that the child?" he said, abruptly.

"Well, son, and hast thou also come to cast shame on this poor unwelcome one, like the man who has just gone from hence?—I blush to say, thy foster-brother and thy lord," was the stern answer of Ulrika.

The student knelt on one knee, and took gently

the baby-hand that peeped out of the purple mantle prepared for the heir. He examined it long and eagerly—

"One may see the flowers form in the bud, and I might, perhaps, trace the lines even now," he said. "Ah! there it is—even as I read in the stars—a noble nature—a life destined for some great end. Yet these crosses—oh! fate, strange and solemn, but not sad. And some aspects of her birth are the same as in mine own. It is marvelous!"

Ulrika drew away the child, and sighed.

"Ah! my son—my noble Ansgarius—wilt thou still go on with thy unearthly lore? It is not meet for one to whom holy church has long opened her bosom; and said, come, my child—my only one—I would fain see thee less learned, and more pious. What art thou now muttering over this babe—some of thy secrets about the stars? All—all are vanity!"

"Mother," said Ansgarius, sternly, "thou believest in thy dreams and revelations from Heaven—I in my science. Let neither judge the other harshly, for the world outside thus judges both."

And he went on with his earnest examination of the child's palm, occasionally moving to the turret window to look out on the sky, now all glittering with stars, and then again consulting the tablets that he always carried in his girdle.

Ulrika watched him with a steady and mournful gaze, which softened into the light of mother-love her dark, gleaming, almost fierce eyes. She sat, or rather crouched, at the foot of the Virgin's niche, with the babe asleep on her knees. Her lean, yellow fingers ran over the beads of her rosary, and her lips moved silently.

"Mother," said Ansgarius, suddenly, "what art thou doing there?"

"Praying for thee, my son," she answered—"praying that these devices lead thee not astray, and that thou mayest find at last the true wisdom."

"I want it not—I believe but what I know, and have proved. It was thy will which clad me in this priest's garment. I opposed it not, but I will seek God in my own way. I will climb to His heaven by the might of knowledge—that alone will make me like unto Him."

Ulrika turned away from her son.

"And it was to this man—this proud, self-glorifier—that I would fain have confided the pure young soul this night sent upon the earth! No—son of my bosom—my life's care—may the Merciful One be long-suffering with thee until the change in thy spirit come. And this worse than orphan babe, O Mother of consolation, I lay at thy feet, with the last orison of a life spent in prayers. For this new human soul, accept the offering of that which now comes to thee."

Ulrika's latter words were faint and indistinct, and her head leaned heavily against the feet of the image. Her son, absorbed in his pursuits, neither saw nor heard. Suddenly she arose, stood upright, and cried with a loud, clear, joyful voice—

"It will come, that glory—I see it now—the golden cross she bears upon the hills of snow. There are foot-steps before her—they are thine, son of my hopes—child of my long-enduring faith! Ansgarius—my Ansgarius—thou art the blessed—the chosen one!"

Her voice failed suddenly, and she sank, on bended knees, at the feet of the Virgin. Ansgarius, startled, almost terrified, lifted up his head, so that the lamplight illumined her face. The son looked on his dead mother.

CHAPTER II.

LET us pass over a few years, before we stand once more in the gray towers of Aveyran.

It was a feast, for Sir Loys was entertaining a strange guest—an old man, who came unattended and unaccompanied, save by a child and its nurse. He had claimed, rather than implored, hospitality; and though he came in such humble guise, there was a nobility in his bearing which impressed the knight with perfect faith in his truth, when the wanderer declared his rank to be equal with that of Sir Loys himself.

"Who I am and what I seek, I will reveal ere I depart," abruptly said the wanderer; and with the chivalrous courtesy of old the host sought to know no more, but bade him welcome to Aveyran.

The old man sat at the board, stern and grave, and immovable as a statue; but his little son ran hither and thither, and played with the knight's wife and her maidens, who praised his fair silken hair, his childish beauty, and his fearless confidence. But wherever he moved, there followed him continually the cold, piercing eyes of the nurse—a tall woman, whose dress was foreign, and who never uttered a word, save in a tongue which sounded strange and harsh in the musical ears of the Provençals.

The feast over, the guest arose, and addressed the knight of Aveyran—

"Sir Loys, for the welcome and good cheer thou hast given, receive the thanks of Hialmar Jarl, chief of all the Vikings of the north."

At this name, once the terror of half of Europe, the knight made a gesture of surprise, and a thrill of apprehension ran through the hall. Hialmar saw it, and a proud smile bent his lips.

"Children of the south, ye need not fear, though the sea-eagle is in your very nest; he is old and gray—his talons are weak now," said the Jarl, adopting the metaphorical name which had been given him in former times, and which was his boast still.

"Hialmar is welcome—we fear no enemy in a guest and a stranger," answered Sir Loys. "Let the noble Jarl say on."

The Viking continued—

"I have vowed to take for my son a southern bride. Throughout Europe, I have found no nest in which the young eagle could mate. Sir Loys of Aveyran, thou art noble and courteous—thou hast many fair daughters—give me one, that I may betroth her unto my son."

At this sudden proposition, Sir Loys looked aghast, and the Lady of Aveyran uttered a suppressed shriek; for the Vikings were universally regarded with terror, as barbarous heathens; and many were the legends of young maidens carried off by them with a short and rough wooing.

Hialmar glanced at the terror-stricken faces around, and his own grew dark with anger.

"Is there here any craven son of France who dares despise a union with the mighty line of Hialmar?" he cried, threateningly. "But the ship of the Viking rides on the near seas, and the sea-eagle will make his talons strong, and his pinions broad, yet."

Sir Loys half-drew his sword, and then replaced it. He was too true a knight to show discourtesy to an aged and unarmed guest.

"Hialmar," he answered, calmly, "thy words are somewhat free, but mine shall remember thy gray hairs. Thou seest my four daughters; but I cannot give one as thy son's bride, seeing they are already betrothed in the fashion of our country; and a good knight's pledge is never broken."

"And are there no more of the line of Aveyran?" inquired Hialmar.

Sir Loys was about to reply, when, from a side-table that had been spread with meagre, lenten fare, contrasting with the plenty-laden board, there rose up a man in a monk's dress. From under the close cowl two piercing eyes confronted the Lord of Aveyran. They seemed to force truth from his lips against his will.

"I have one child more," he said, "a poor, worthless plant, but she will be made a nun. Why dost thou gaze at me so strangely, Father Ansgarius?" added the knight, uneasily. "Ulrika—Heaven rest her soul!"—and he crossed himself almost fearfully—"thy mother Ulrika seems to look at me from thine eyes."

"Even so," said the monk, in a low tone. "Then, Loys of Aveyran, hear her voice from my lips. I see in the words of this strange guest the working of Heaven's will. Do thou dispute it not. Send for the child Hermolin."

The knight's loud laugh rang out as scornfully as years before in the little turret-chamber.

"What!" said he, though he took courteous care the words should not reach Hialmar's ears, "am I to be swayed hither and thither by old women's dreams and priestly prophecies? I thought it was by thy consent, good father, that she was to become a nun, and now thou sayest she shall wed this young whelp of a northern bear."

Ansgarius replied not to this contemptuous speech, but his commanding eyes met the knight's, and once again the bold Sir Loys grew humble; as if the dead Ulrika's soul had passed into that of her son, so as to sway her foster-child still.

"It is a strange thing for a servant of Holy Church to strive to break a vow, especially which devotes a child to the Virgin. I dare not do so great a sin!" faintly argued the Lord of Aveyran.

But it seemed as though the cloudy, false subterfuge with which the knight had veiled his

meaning fell off, pierced through and through by the lightning of those truth-penetrating eyes. Sir Loys reddened to the very brow, with confusion as much as with anger.

"Isabelle," he muttered, "desire one of thy maidens to bring hither our youngest child."

The silent, meek lady of Aveyran had never a word of opposition to any of her lord's behests. She only lifted up her placid eyes in astonishment at this unusual command, and then obeyed it.

Hermolin was brought, trembling, weeping, too terrified even to struggle. Oh, sad and darkened image of childhood, when a gleam of unwonted kindness and love seemed to strike almost with fear the poor desolate little heart, accustomed only to a gloomy life of coldness and neglect. For the dislike, almost hatred, that fell like a shadow on her unwelcome birth, had gathered deeper and darker over the lonely child. No father's smile, no mother's caresses, were her portion. Shut out from the sunshine of love, the young plant grew up frail, wan, feeble, without beauty or brightness. No one ever heard from Hermolin's lips the glad laughter of infancy: among her sisters, she seemed like a shadow in the midst of their brightness. As she stood in the doorway, cowering under the robe of her conductor, her thin hands hiding her pale face, so unlike a child's in its sharp outline, and her large restless eyes glancing in terror on all before her, the Norsewoman's freezing gaze was the first turned towards her.

"By Odin! and it is such poor, worthless gifts as this that the Christians offer to their gods!" she muttered in her own language.

"What art thou saying, Ulva?" sharply asked the Viking.

"Nothing, my lord," she answered, submissively, "but that the young Olof has at last found himself a bride. Look there."

The noble boy, whose fearless, frank, and generous spirit even now shone out, had darted forward, and now, with his arms clasped round Hermolin's neck, was soothing her fears, and trying to encourage her with childish caresses. The little girl understood not a word of his strange Norse tongue, but the tones were gentle and loving. She looked up at the sweet young face that bent over, half-wondering at something which seemed new to her in the blue eyes and bright golden hair. Twining her fingers in one of Olof's abundant locks, she compared it with one of her own long dark curls, laughed a low musical laugh, and finally, reassured, put up her little mouth to kiss him, in perfect confidence. Olof, proud of his success, led the little maiden through the room, amidst many a covert smile and jest.

But when the two children came near Sir Loys, Hermolin shrank back, and clung, weeping, to Olof's breast. There was no love in the father's heart, but there was much of pride and bitterness. The child's unconscious terror proclaimed aloud all the secrets of her cheerless life; it angered him beyond endurance. He clenched his gauntleted

hands, and though he strove to make his tone calm, as became a right courteous knight, yet there was in it somewhat of wrathful sarcasm, as he addressed his guest.

"Jarl Hialmar, there stands my youngest child—though her looks would seem to belie the noble blood she owns. Heaven may take her, or thou—I care little which, so as I am no more burthened with a jewel I covet not."

The Norseman eyed with curiosity and doubt the frail, trembling child, who stood still enshielded by Olof's arms. It might be that the magic of that boyish love drew also the father's pity towards the little Hermolin; or, perchance, the sorrowful, imploring look of those deep, lustrous brown eyes, brought back the memory of others, which long ago had drooped in darkness—the darkness of a life without love. The Jarl's face wore a new softness and tenderness when he beheld Hermolin; she felt it, and trembled not when Olof led her to his father's knees.

Hialmar, still irresolute, turned to the nurse, who stood behind, watching every movement of her foster-son.

"Ulva," he said, in his Norse language, "thou hast been faithful, even as a mother, to thy lord's child. What sayest thou—shall we take this poor unloved babe as a bride for the last of the race of Hialmar?"

Ulva's cold eyes regarded Hermolin; they wandered with jealous eagerness over the slight drooping form; the white thin arms, that seemed wasting away like the last snow-wreaths of winter; the quick-flitting roses that deepened and faded momentarily on the marble cheek; and she said, in her heart—

"It is well; death will come before the bridal; and then, the vow fulfilled, Olof shall take a northern maiden to his bosom, and the footstep of the stranger shall not defile the halls of his fathers."

Then Ulva bent humbly before the Viking, saying aloud—

"My lips are not worthy to utter their desire; but has not the young Olof himself chosen. The great Odin sometimes speaks his will by the lips of babes, as well as by those of aged seers. It may be so now!"

"It shall be!" cried Hialmar. "Sir Loys, I take thy daughter to be mine, according as thou saidst. Thy church must seek another votary; for Hermolin shall be Olof's bride."

So saying, he enclosed both the children in his embrace, at which young Olof laughed, and clapped his hands, while the little Hermolin, half afraid, half wondering, only looked in the boy's bright face, and her own was lit up with confidence and joy. So, during the whole ceremony of betrothal, the baby-bride still seemed to draw courage and gladness from the fearless smile of her boy-lover, never removing her gaze from that sweet countenance, which had thus dawned upon her, the first love sunshine her young life had ever known.

When Olof was parted from his childish spouse, she clung to him with a wild, despairing energy,

almost terrible in one so young. He called her by the new name they had taught him to use towards her, and which he uttered, and she heard—both now unconscious of the solemn life-bond it implied. Yet still it appeared to have a soothing influence; her tears ceased, and her delicate frame was no longer convulsed with grief. She lay in his arms, still and composed. But at that moment there bent over them a tall dark shadow; it seemed to the child's vivid imagination one of those evil spectral forms of which she had heard, and Ulva interposed her strong grasp. The last sight that Hermolin saw was not the beaming face, already so fondly beloved, of her young bridegroom, but the countenance of the Norsewoman had turned round upon her, with the gloomy, threatening brow, and the white teeth glittering in a yet more fearful smile. No wonder that, years after, it haunted the child, coming between her and the sunny image which from that time ever visited her dreams, less like a reality than an angel from the unknown world.

CHAPTER III.

BENEATH the shadow of her convent walls the child Hermolin grew up. Her world was not that of her kindred; between her and them a line of separation was drawn that might not be crossed. She lived all alone. This was the destiny of her childhood and dawning youth. It was her father's will; she knew it, and murmured not. She lifted up to heaven those affections which she was forbidden to indulge on earth; and when she came to the Virgin's feet, her prayers and her love were less those of a devotee to a saint, than that of a child whose heart yearned towards a mother. She spent in vague reveries those sweet, tender fancies which might have brightened home; and for all brother and sister-love, her heart gathered its every tendril around the remembered image, which, star-like, had risen on her early childhood. It was her first memory; beyond it all seemed a shapeless dream of pain and darkness. The image was that of Olof. They had told her that she was his betrothed—that he alone of all the world laid claim to her; and though she understood not the tie, nor the fulfilment that might come one day, still she clung to it as to some strange blessedness and joy that had been once and would be again, of which the bright beautiful face, with its golden-shadowed hair, was a remembrance and an augury. Once, in a convent picture—rude, perhaps, yet most beautiful to her—the child fancied the limned head bore a likeness to this dream-image, and from that time it was impressed more firmly on her imagination. It mingled strangely with her vows, her prayers, and, above all, with her shadowy pictures of the future, over which, throughout her childhood, such mystery hung.

Hermolin knew that she had been devoted to the service of Heaven. From her still convent she beheld the distant towers of Aveyran; she saw the festive train that carried away her eldest sister a bride; she heard from over the plains the dull

lament which told of her unseen mother's death, she joined the vespers for the departed soul. But all those tokens of the outside world were to her only phantasms of life. Far above them all, and looking down upon them, as a star looks down on the unquiet earth, dwelt Hermolin.

Yet she knew also that it would not be always so. The nuns regarded her as set apart, and not one of themselves. Round her neck she wore the betrothal ring, which as, day by day, her small childish hand grew to maiden roundness, she used to draw on, in a mood too earnest to be mere sport, wondering how soon the finger would fit the token, and with that, what strange change would come. And as her childhood passed by, Hermolin began to see a deeper meaning in the exhortations of one she loved dearest in the world—the monk who had been her confessor, friend, and counsellor all her life—Father Ansgarius.

There had come a change over the son of Ulrika. Who can tell how strong is a mother's prayer? The answering joy which her life could not attain to, was given to her death. A flower sprung up from the mother's dust, which brought peace, and holiness, and gladness into the bosom of the son. After her death, Ansgarius believed. He believed, not with the arid, lifeless faith of an assenting intellect, but the full, deep earnestness of a heart which takes into itself God's image, and is all-penetrated with the sunshine of His presence. The great and learned man saw that there was a higher knowledge still—that which made him even as a little child, cry, "O thou All-wise, teach me!—O thou All-merciful, love me!"

Thus a spirit, strong as a man's, and gentle as a woman's, guided the early years of Hermolin—the child of prayers. And so it is; God ever answers these heart-beseechings, not always in the manner we will it—even as the moisture which rises up to heaven in soft dew, sometimes falls down in rain, but it surely does fall, and where earth most needs it. Gradually as her young soul was nurtured in peace and holiness, Ansgarius unfolded the future mission, in which he believed, with all the earnestness that singles out from the rest of mankind the true apostle—the *man sent*.

Hermolin listened humbly, reverently, then joyfully. On her young mind the story of Ulrika's dream impressed itself with a vivid power, from which her whole ideas took their coloring. And deeper, stronger, more engrossing became her worship of that golden-haired angel-youth, who, with her, was to bear unto the snow-covered mountains the holy cross. She had no thought of human love: in her mind, Olof was only an earth-incarnation of the saint before whose likeness she daily prayed; and who would come one day, and lead her on her life's journey, to fulfil the destiny of which Ansgarius spoke. But when, as years passed, her beautiful womanhood expanded leaf by leaf, like the bud of a rose, to which every day there comes a deeper color and a lovelier form, Hermolin was conscious of a new want in

her soul. It was not enough that the beloved ideal should haunt her thoughts, and look on her in her slumbers—a glorious being to be regarded with a worship deep, wild, as only the heart of dreaming girlhood knows. Hermolin had need of a more human and answering love. In all that she saw of the world's beauty—in all the new, glad feelings which overflowed her heart—she longed for some dear eyes to look into—some dear hand to press—that her deep happiness might not waste itself unshared. Looking out from her bower in the convent garden, she sometimes saw, in the twilight, young lovers wandering along the green hillside, singing their Provençal lays, or sitting side by side in a happy silence, which is to the glad outburst of love what the night, with her pure, star-lit quiet, and her deep pulses—beating all the fuller for that mysterious stillness—is to the sunny, open, all-rejoicing day. And then Hermolin's bosom thrilled with an unwonted emotion; and she thought how strange and beautiful must be that double life, when each twin heart says to the other, "I am not mine own, but thine—nay, I am not thine, but thyself—a part of thee!"

But all these fancies Hermolin folded up closely in her maiden bosom, though she knew not why she did so. And even when the time came that the token-ring ever clasped her delicate finger with a loving embrace, she still lived her pure and peaceful life, awaiting the perfecting of that destiny which she believed was to come.

At last, on a day when it was not his wont to visit the convent, Ansgarius appeared. He found the young maiden sitting at her embroidery beneath the picture which was her delight. Often and often the gaudy work fell from her hands, while she looked up at the beautiful and noble face that seemed to watch over her.

Ansgarius came and stood beside his young pupil. His emotions were restless, and his eyes wandering; and there was an unquiet tremulousness in his voice, which spoke more of the jarring world without, than of the subdued peace which ever abided within the convent walls. Hermolin was seized with a like uneasiness.

"My father," she said—for she had long since learned to give that title to her only friend—"my father, what is it that troubles thee?"

"I might say the same to thee, dear child; for thy cheek is flushed, and thine eye bright," the monk answered, evasively.

"I know not why, but my heart is not at rest," Hermolin said. "I feel a vague expectation, as if there were a voice calling me that I must answer, and arise and go."

The face of Ansgarius was lighted up with a wild enthusiasm. "It is the power of the Virgin upon the child," he murmured. "The time, the time is at hand! My daughter, wait," he said more calmly; "if the call be Heaven's, thou canst not but follow at Heaven's good pleasure."

"I do—I will," said Hermolin, meekly; and

she folded her hands upon her young bosom, while her confessor gave her the benediction.

"And now, my child, I have somewhat to say to thee; wilt thou listen?"

"Yes, here, my father," she answered, seating herself at his feet, while her fingers played with a coarse rosary of wooden beads, which she had worn all her life. After a long silence, it caught the eye of the monk, and he burst forth—

"Child, child, dare not make a toy of that holy relic; never look at it but with prayers. Remember whose dying fingers once closed over it—on whose cold breast it once lay—ay, along with thee!"

"I remember," said Hermolin, softly. "Forgive me, O father, forgive me—blessed soul of Ulrika;" and, kissing the crucifix, she raised her pure eyes to heaven.

"Amen!" said Ansgarius, devoutly. "And, O mother! strengthen me to tell this child of the past and the future—mine and hers."

He remained silent for a little, and then said, suddenly—

"Hermolin, thou knowest what she was, and how she died. Listen while I speak, not of her, the blessed one! but of myself, and my sin. I lived in darkness, I scorned the light, until it burst upon me with the brightness of her soul, shed from its glorious wings when it rose to God. In that night I lay down, and dreamed I walked along a road all foul, and strewn with briars and thorns. Then came a vision; it was the last of earthly mothers, Mary. She showed me a bright pathway on which moved glorious angels, like women in countenance. One face was that which had bent over my childhood, youth, and manhood, with untiring love. Oh, mother! how I sprang forward with a yearning heart to thee; but the vision stood between us, and I heard a voice saying, 'Son, thou canst never go to thy mother till thy feet are no longer defiled. Leave that thorny way, and ascend to the heavenly road.' Then I awoke, and knew what my sin had been. O mother-saint, pray for me in heaven, that it may not be laid to my charge!"

The monk sighed heavily, and bent down his head, already thickly strewn with the snowy footsteps of age. Then Hermolin stood up, and her face was as that of a young saint, resplendent with the inward shining of her pure, heaven-kindled soul; and she said, in a tone like one inspired—

"God and thy mother have forgiven thee, since thou hast done the will of both towards me. If, as thou hast said, I must go forth at Heaven's bidding, for a life to be spent in working that holy will, all men, and the angels that wait on men, shall behold that it is thy word I speak—it is thy spirit which dwells in me."

Ansgarius looked amazed, for never before had the maiden given such utterance to the thoughts

* For this incident in the life of Ansgarius, see the "History of Sweden," translated by Mary Howitt.

which pervaded her whole life. Again he murmured, "The time is near." But even while he regarded her, another change seemed to come over the fitful spirit of Hermolin. She sank at the monk's feet, and bathed them with a shower of tears.

"Oh, father, guide me," she wept. "I am not as I was; there is a change—I feel it in my heart, and I tremble."

"It is the shadow of thy coming fate, my child," said Ansgarius, solemnly; "know thy bridegroom is at hand."

Hermolin sprang up with a wild gesture of joy.

"Olof!—Olof! Is Olof here?" she cried.

And then, with an instinctive impulse of maidenly shame-facedness, she drooped her head, and hid her burning cheeks under the novice's veil she wore.

Ansgarius continued. "A ship lies at the river's mouth, and from the towers of Aveyran I saw a train winding across the plain. It may be that of the son of Hialmar. Nay, why art thou trembling, child? Dost thou shrink from thy destiny?—thou, the chosen of the Virgin, whom I have reared up to this end with daily and nightly prayers," added Ansgarius, sternly.

But the ascetic monk, absorbed in the one purpose of his existence, knew not the wild flutterings of that young heart, nor how at the moment Hermolin was less the devotee, ready to work out her life's aim, than the timid maiden about to welcome, in her betrothed, the realization of a whole girlhood's dream of ideal love. Ansgarius took her by the hand, and led her to the Virgin's shrine. There, at his bidding, Hermolin, half unconscious of what she did, renewed her vows of dedication; but while she knelt, the noise of rude, yet joyful music, was heard, and up the hill wound a goodly train. First of all there rode one, who, to the strong frame and almost giant proportions of manhood, added the clear, fair face of a youth. His long, sun-bright locks floated in the wind, and his eagle's plume danced above them; his eye, bold and frank, was that of one born to rule, and there was pride even in his smile. Yet, through all this change, Hermolin knew that face was the same which had been the sunshine of her childhood—the dream of her youth—and her heart leaped towards her bridegroom.

"Olof!—my Olof!" she cried, and would have flown to meet him, with the same child-like love which had poured itself forth in tears on his neck years before, in the castle of Aveyran, but Ansgarius stood before her.

"I am little versed in the world's ways," he said, "yet it seems to me that this is scarcely the guise in which a maiden should go to meet her bridegroom;" and he glanced at the coarse nun's dress which always enfolded the light form of Hermolin. The words touched a new chord in the soul of the young betrothed.

Never until then had Hermolin thought whether she were beautiful or no. In her calm retirement, she heard no idle talk about maiden's

charms. Day after day she attired herself in her simple dress, and felt no grief in folding up her long silken tresses under her close veil, or enveloping her slender figure in the coarse robe and thick girdle of cord. But now her heart beat with anxiety; she fled hastily away to her own chamber. There she found the aged nun who attended her, while many rich garments, such as high-born damsels wore, lay scattered about. The glistening of them dazzled and confused Hermolin's senses. She stood motionless, while the nun silently exchanged her simple robe for the new attire; and then, while she beheld herself in this unwonted likeness, her courage failed, her whole frame trembled, and she wept passionately.

Hermolin felt that she was not beautiful. Another night, perhaps, have seen, in the small, almost child-like form, an airy grace that atoned for its want of dignity, and have traced admiringly the warm southern blood that gave richness to the clear brown skin. But Hermolin had known one only ideal of perfection; and all beauty, that bore no likeness to Olof, was as nothing in her eyes.

Soon, ringing through the still convent, she heard a bold, clear voice, and the girlish weakness passed away, while a boundless devotion sprang up in the woman's heart of Hermolin. Love, which united the clinging tenderness of the human, with the deep worship of the divine, took possession of her inmost soul. When she stood before her bridegroom, she thought of herself no more—she became absorbed in him. And when young Olof, in his somewhat rough but affectionate greeting, lifted his fairy-like bride up in his strong arms, he little knew how deep and wild was the devotion of that heart, which then cast itself down at his feet, to be cherished, thrown aside, or trampled on, yet loving evermore.

CHAPTER IV.

ON, gayly on, ploughing the same seas which had carried on their stormy breast the dead and the newly-born, went the ship of the young Norse chieftain. And onward to the same northern home, from beneath whose blighting shadow the dying mother had been borne, was wafted another southern bride. But it was not with her as with the wife of Hialmar. Love, mighty, all-enduring love, made Hermolin go forth, strong and fearless. She stood on the rocking deck, with the dark, surging, shoreless waves before her eyes, not the green, sheep-besprinkled meads, and purple vineyards of Provence, with the rude voices and the wild countenances of the Viking's crew ever haunting her, instead of the vesper chants, and the mild faced nuns, with their noiseless, sweeping garments. But Hermolin trembled not, doubted not, for Olof was near her, and his presence lighted up her world with joy. The freezing north wind seemed to blow across her brow with the softness of a balm-scented breeze, when she met it, standing by her husband's side, or leaning against his breast. She looked not once back to the sunny shore of Provence, but ever onward to

the north, the strong and daring north, without fear, and in the fulness of hope, for it was Olof's land.

And he, the one, sole master of this golden mine of love, this true woman's heart, pure as rich, and rich as beautiful, how was it with him? He took it as a long-preserved possession, which came to him as a right, whose value he never troubled himself to estimate. The young heir of the Viking had heard, all his life, of the southern bride who awaited his pleasure to claim her. Now and then, during the few seasons of restless idleness which intervened by chance between his hunting and his war expeditions, the soft dark eyes and twining arms of a little child had crossed his memory, but Ulva, his nurse, said such ideas were weak and womanish in a chieftain's son, and bade him drive them away with bold thoughts and active deeds, more becoming in a man.

Jarl Hjalmar lived to behold his son the bravest of the young northern warriors, and then sank into the embrace of the Volkyriæ. He died in battle, one hand on his sword, and the other grasping a long lock of woman's hair. On this relic he made the son of the dead Clotilde swear, by the soul of his mother, to claim from the lord of France, either by fair words or force of arms, his plighted bride; and so Olof, longing for adventurous deeds in any cause, went forth with all the eagerness of youth on his quest. A little while he rejoiced in his prize, like a child toying with a precious jewel; a little while he softened his bold, fierce nature into the semblance of gentleness and love; and then, looking in his face, whereon was set the seal of almost angelic beauty, Hermolin believed in the realization of all her dreams. The golden-haloed saint of her peaceful youth lived again in the beloved Olof.

And so it was, that in the wild fulness of this new joy, this blessed, human love, Hermolin, the child vowed to the Virgin, the pious maiden of the convent, became merged in Hermolin, the wife of the young northern Jarl. It was less the pupil of Ansgarius, sent forth, heaven-guided, on her holy mission, than the devoted woman, who would fain cling through life and death unto her heart's chosen. Gradually the shadow of an earthly love was gliding between the pure spirit and heaven's light, and when it is so, ever with that soul-eclipse darkness comes.

When the ship yet rode upon the seas, Olof's mien wore less of bridegroom tenderness, and he grew chafed and restless at times. He lingered not at Hermolin's side, to listen while she spoke of her childish past, or talk to her of the future—of their northern home. He never now, in lover-like playfulness, made her teach him then the almost forgotten speech of his mother's land, or laughed when her sweet lips tried in vain to frame the harsh accents of the north. Many a time, Hermolin stood lonely by the vessel's side, trying to bring back to her soul those holy and pure thoughts which had once made a heaven of soli-

tude. But still in the clouds, to which she lifted her eyes, in the waves which dashed almost against her feet, she only saw and heard Olof's face and Olof's voice. Then she would remember the parting words of Ansgarius, when he stood watching the ship, that, as he still fervently believed, bore, dove-like, the olive-branch of peace, and pure faith to that northern land—

"My child," he said, "love thy husband—worship only God."

And conscious of its wild idolatry the heart of Hermolin trembled, so that it dared not even pray.

At last the vessel neared the land of the north, with its giant snow-mountains, its dark pine-forests, its wild, desolate plains. To the eyes of the young Provençale it seemed, in its winter-bound stillness, like the dead earth lying, awfully beautiful, beneath her white-folded shroud. Hermolin felt as though she stood at the entrance of the land of shadows, with its solemn gloom, its eternal silence; and yet, while she gazed, her soul was filled with a sublime rapture. She crept to the side of her young spouse, folded his hand in her bosom, and looked up timidly in his face—

"Oh, my Olof," she whispered, "this then is our home—this is thy land—how beautiful it is—how grand!"

The young Jarl looked down on his fair wife, and smiled at her evident emotion, with the careless superiority with which he might have regarded the vagaries of a wayward child.

"Yes," he answered, "it is a goodly land; these pine-forests are full of bears, and the sea-kings have had many a well-fought battle with the land-robbers in the defiles of the mountains. It was there that the sword of Olof was first red-dened," the Jarl continued, proudly, while his lips curled and his eyes grew dilated.

A little did Hermolin shrink, even from that beloved hand she was folding to her heart; but immediately she drew closer to him, and wound his arm around her neck.

"Do not say this, my Olof," she murmured, caressingly; "let us talk rather of that glad time when there shall be no more warfare, the time of which I have often told thee, my beloved, when the golden cross shines on the white snow, and thou and I——"

But Olof silenced her with a burst of half-derisive laughter. "Not I, my fair wife, not I, Thou mayst dream among thy pretty toys, thy crosses, and rosaries; such playthings are fit for women and children, but the son of Hjalmar trusts to the faith of his fathers. Do as thou wilt, little one, only let me handle the hunting-spear, and guide the ship, and drain the mead-cups. Odin loves the bold arm of a warrior better than the puling lips of a saint, and the blood of an enemy is more precious in his sight than a thousand whining prayers. But see, there are my good soldiers awaiting us. Hark! their shouts of welcome. Verily, I am glad to see again my father's land!"

And the young Viking stood on his vessel's

deck, magnificent in his proud and fearless beauty, acknowledging his followers' wild acclaims, as they rang through the still winter air. He saw not that his bride had shrunk away from his side, to where none could witness her agony. Her wild, tearless eyes wandered from the ghostlike mountains to the cold, clear, frosty sky, but the solemn beauty of the scene was gone—all was desolation now. It seemed to her a world on which the light of heaven and life-giving smile had never shone—a world where all was coldness, and silence, and death, and in it she stood alone—alone with the ruins of a life's dream.

Hermolin neither wept nor struggled against her misery. There was no anger in her heart, only utter despair. She looked at Olof where he stood, the very ideal of proud and glorious manhood, in all things resembling the dream-image of so many years. Hermolin's soul clung to it, and to him, with a wild intensity, that made her love seem almost terrible in its strength. And thus, while she thought of her life to come, Hermolin shuddered less at the unveiling of his heart's change, than at the knowledge of the deep faithfulness that would make enduring sorrow the portion of her own.

"I love him," she moaned, "through all—in spite of all—I love him! Olof, my noble, my beautiful; the light of my life. Oh, God, have mercy—have mercy on me!"

CHAPTER V.

BE still, oh, north wind; howl not at the iron-bound lattice; she hears not thee. Blinding snow, sweep not in such mad gusts over the mountains; thou canst not dim her eyes and freeze her heart more than an inward anguish has already effected. If Hermolin dwelt among the rose-bowers of Provence, instead of the chill, ghostly halls of the Viking, there would be the same icy burthen on her soul—the same dark shadow over all things on which her eyes look. The heart makes its own sunshine—its own eternal gloom.

The Jarl's bride was alone. Even that day he had left her on the threshold of the palace, and the envious eyes of the wondering Norse hand-maidens had been the only welcome in her husband's halls. Through those halls she glided like a wandering spirit, shrinking from their ghastly grandeur, that filled her young soul with fear. The white-tusked spoils of the bear-hunters seemed to grin like evil spirits from the walls; and as she passed by the empty armor of many a departed Viking, spectral shapes appeared to creep within it, until beneath the vacant helm glittered fiery eyes, and shadowy hands formed themselves out of the air, wielding the ungrasped spear. Hermolin shivered with terror; her limbs moved heavily; her eyes dared not lift themselves from the ground.

One sun-gleam from that bright, beloved face, and the horrible phantoms would have fled like dreams. But it came not. Hermolin reached her chamber, and was alone. Ringing through

the long corridor, she heard the laughter of her retreating maiden-train; she listened while they mocked at the terrors of the Jarl's young bride, and said how much fitter had been a fearless Norse maiden, than a poor shrinking child of the south, to tread the halls of the son of Hjalmar.

Hermolin's cheek flushed, and her terror changed to pride—not for herself, but for him.

"They shall never say the wife of Olof is afraid. I will be strong—I will teach my heart to beat as it were with the bold northern blood. My Olof, thou shalt not blush for me."

But still the young cheek blanched at the shrieks which seemed to mingle in the tempestuous blast, and still, when the blazing fagots cast fantastic shapes on the walls, Hermolin started and trembled. Hour after hour passed, and Olof came not. Her fears melted into sorrow, and she poured forth the tears of an aching and lonely heart.

Wild storm of the north, howl over that poor broken flower, but thou canst not wither the life-fluid which will yet make its leaves green, and its blossoms fair—the essence of its being—its hope—its strength—its enduring love.

Still, as ever, alone, Hermolin retraced the gloomy halls, as she glided, like a spirit of light come to reanimate the dead, past the mailed shadows, that kept memorial watch over the Viking's halls, with her faint gleaming lamp, and her floating hair, which every blast seemed to lift with a spirit hand.

Led by the distant sound of voices, Hermolin came to the festival hall. Her terror-stricken fancy had pictured Olof in the storm; his stalwart frame paralyzed; his gold hair mingling with the snow-wreaths, and death—a terrible death—stealing over him. But as she stood in the shadow-hung entrance, Hermolin saw her lord. He sat among his young warriors, the blithest of all, quaffing many a cup of sparkling mead, his laugh ringing loud, but still musical; and his beautiful face resplendent with mirth and festive gayety.

But for the first time its sunshine fell on Hermolin all joylessly. There was a deadly coldness at her heart, which no power could take away. Her lips murmured a thanksgiving that Olof was safe; but no smile sealed the joyful amen of the orison. Silently as she came she glided away, and the sinner knew not how near him, yet all unregarded, had passed the angel's wing.

When Hermolin reentered her chamber, there rose up from one corner a dark shadow. Soon it formed itself into the likeness of humanity, and confronted the young bride—a woman, not yet aged, but with iron-gray locks and deeply-furrowed brow. Suddenly as the thought of a terrible dream gone by, that wild face, those piercing eyes, rushed upon Hermolin's memory. It was the remembrance which had been the haunting terror of her childhood—the face of Ulva.

The nurse bent in a half-mocking courtesy to Olof's wife.

"Welcome, my lady, from the south, whose vacant chamber I have dared to enter," said Ulva.

"Perchance she likes it not; but it is too late now."

"My lord's home is ever pleasant in his wife's eyes," answered Hermolin, striving to impart strength and dignity to her trembling frame.

"It is well," said the nurse. "But the southern lady should know that it is not our custom for the wife of a noble Jarl to steal like a thief about the halls at night, and that the northern heroes admit no woman to their feasts. The young Olof's eyes had darted angry lightnings, had he known his bride intruded so near."

Hermolin shrunk from the loud and fierce tones of the Norsewoman. But while pressing her clasped hands on her breast, she felt Ulrika's cross. It gave her strength; for it carried her thoughts back from the desolate present to the pure and holy past; and from the remembered convent shrine lifted them up heavenwards, as prayers. Then she turned to Ulva, and said, in that sweet meekness which bears with it unutterable weight—

"I am a stranger, and I know thee not. But I love my lord, and all that are his; therefore I forgive these discourteous words to Olof's wife. Now I would rest and be alone."

As a spirit of evil steals from the light, so Ulva crept from the presence of Hermolin, and the young wife was once more alone.

No, not alone, though she sank prostrate on the floor, and laid her young brow on the cold stone, not even a silent lifting up of the eyes showing whither the heart fled in its desolation. Yet that stone was a Bethel-pillow, and there the angel-winged prayers and angel-footed blessings ascended and descended between her and God. There for the first time arose up from those heathen halls the voice of thanksgiving. The wild blast came, and bore away amidst its thunder the sweet echoes of the Virgin's vespers-hymn; they floated upwards towards the snow mountains, music-clouds of incense, that marked the consecration of that wild land. And far above the loud organ-voice of the south, with its thousand altars and myriad orisons, arose from the desolate north the clear, low tone of one woman's earnest, loving prayer.

Then it seemed as though the holy ones who minister unseen to man, came and kissed her eyes into a sleep as deep and peaceful as that of the babe Hermolin on the breast of Ulrika. A veil was drawn over her senses, and the mingled sounds of the storm without, and the noisy revel within, melted to the sweetest music, and became a wondrous dream.

Beside her couch, in the spot where Hermolin's fast-closing eyes had watched the first glimmer of the storm-hidden moon, the light gathered and grew, until it became a face. Pale it was, and sad; with damp, wave-bedewed hair, such as we picture the airy shades of those over whom the billows sweep; but the eyes looked out with a sweet, human yearning, and the fair lips smiled with a mournful tenderness. Hermolin beheld without fear, for over the spirit-beauty of that face was cast an earthly likeness she knew well, and in her dream all that she

had by chance heard concerning the mother of Olof grew clear to her. Not with human voice did the vision speak, but it seemed that the soul of the dead overshadowed the sleeping soul of the living, and taught it the wisdom of the spirit-land. Now Hermolin saw how it was that the flower had withered, because it had no root—that the spirit had drooped because there was no in-dwelling love to be its life; and she learned more of love's nature—that its strength is in itself—that it stretches not forth its arms, saying, "Bless me, as I would fain bless—I give, therefore let me receive;" but it draws its light from its own essence, and pours it out in a sun-shine flood, surrounding and interpenetrating the beloved with radiance, as the sun the earth, from which it asks no answering brightness, save the faint reflection of that which itself has given.

And while yet was present in her dream the pale shadow of the joyless wife, whom not even mother-bliss could keep from the land of peace, for which the broken spirit yearned, Hermolin looked towards her own future, and grew strong.

"I love, therefore I can endure all—can do all," was the resolution that shot like a sunbeam through the sleeper's soul; and at the moment a ministering angel looked into that soul, changing the proud, yet noble resolve into the humblest of prayer—"I will; O God, help me!"

Then the pale spirit seemed to rejoice with exceeding gladness, while mingling with her divine joy, a human mother-love made it still more sublime and tender. And, behold! there stood beside her another soul, whose dark-glorious orbs were added to their earth-likeness, the beauty of eyes which have looked on God. And, the mortal semblance not utterly taken away, but exalted into that perfection which the smile of divinity creates out of very dust, Hermolin knew in her spirit it was Ulrika.

Then bending together over the sleeper, the mother-souls kissed her brow and fled.

Lift up thy voice again, O north wind, whose wings have been the airy chariots of God's messengers—lift up thy voice once more, but let it be in a grand, solemn, God-like hymn, such as should arise from the land of snows; and rifling through the sublime, harmonious cloud, let there be a sun-burst of divine melody, sweet as an angel's smile, telling of love—eternal love—its strength, its holiness, its long-suffering, its omnipotence—love which dwells in humanity, as its life, its essence, its soul—which is God.

CHAPTER VI.

BEYOND the sea-coast, the abode of the race of Hjalmar, arises a giant mountain; pine-forests, huge and dark, clothe its foot; above them tower the gray masses of bare rock, and higher still comes the region of eternal snows. There sits the spirit of white Death, sublime in beautiful desolation; and over it the stars creep, solemn and never-weary watchers throughout the perpetual night. It is a land of silence, without movement, without life. Beneath a vast plain, whereon no trees wave, above a dull-gray sky, over which not a cloud is seen to

float, earth and heaven mock each other in terrible tranquillity, and the wind steals between them, viewless as themselves, for there is nought to interrupt its path.

Lo! there is one trace of life on this land of death—one bold footprint marks the snow—one proud head lifts itself fearlessly up towards the leaden sky. The spirit that guides them is a woman's—one of the most daring of the daughters of the north. Alone, Ulva ascends through forest and rock, to that desolate snow-plain, to ask counsel of the only living soul who inhabits the mountain—the priestess of the Nornir.

Ulva reached the verge of the plain where Svenska had formed her dwelling. It was said that the priestess of the Nornir needed no human sustenance, and that she made her couch among the snows, and that from the time when two stray bear-hunters found the maiden-babe lying on the white plain, she had abode there, a daughter of the unknown world.

And in truth, when Ulva stood before her, the likeness of the priestess was not unbecoming her supposed descent. Even with the spiritual beauty of her form, the dweller among the snows was of a presence that harmonized with the pallid desolation around. Life seemed to flow all bloodlessly beneath the marble frame; the features, still and colorless, were almost ghastly in their motionless and perfect beauty. The pale yellow hair fell down in stirless masses, and the drapery moved as she moved, and gathering round her white spectral folds, and floating without a sound, as snowy clouds over a southern sky.

Ulva fell at her feet, and gazed at her with a strange mingling of religious adoration and human love. Then the pale lips unclosed, to answer and to exhort; and the whole snow-statue became the inspired priestess. Long they talked—the woman of earth and the daughter of solitudes; and their speech was of the new, strange worship that was creeping in upon Odin's land, after the footsteps of the southern maid, who had been brought into the halls of Hialmar.

"I see it coming," cried Ulva, passionately. "The shapeless horror has its foot already on the threshold of the Viking. Already Olof wars no more, but sits idly by the hearth, and listens to southern tales from the whining lips of Hermolin. Even now the meadcup and the meats due to Odin are given to the throats of sick beggars, whom our fathers suffered not to cumber earth! And my lord Olof, the babe that I reared, hears it said that the gods of his fathers are false, and pardons the accursed lie, because it comes from fair lips. Oh, priestess, to whom, if thou art the daughter of the gods, I have given year by year at least somewhat of mortal nurture, until the child I loved has grown up the sacred maiden I adore—holy Svenska, give me counsel! How shall I tread out in the dust this growing fire—how save from defilement the worship of Odin?"

Svenska lifted her face to the east, where, out of the darkness, were beginning to shoot the starry

battalions which light up northern skies. Then she said "Follow," and began to traverse the snow with almost winged speed.

At last Ulva and her guide stood on the apex of the mountain!—there three peaks lifted themselves up—the utmost boundary of the visible world; beyond, all was nothingness. The peculiar idealization of Norse-worship, which, in the grandest and most fearful objects of nature, found its divinities, had symbolized in these giant rocks the three Nornir, or destinies, Udr, Verthandi, and Skulld. As they stood out against the cold, gray sky, imagination might have traced in each a vague outline, somewhat resembling a female form, beneath the shadowy veil of snow, which no human hand could ever lift. Thus, in these solemn shapes, abiding between earth and heaven, it was not strange that their worshippers should see the emblems of the rulers of human destinies, until at last, as in all symbolized faiths, the myth and its outward type became one.

Svenska lifted up her voice, and it rang through the still, ice-bound air like a clarion—

"There is a spirit arising in Odin's land, and ye fear its might. The priest trembles beneath the temple's shadow, and the warrior's hand grows palsied upon the spear. Shall it grow up like a darkness over the shrines of our gods and the graves of our fathers! Skulld, far-seer into the future, answer!"

But there was silence over all.

Svenska bowed herself to the ground, and then said—

"It is vain! From north to south, from east to west, between earth and sky, float the threads which the Nornir weave. They are there, encompassing us continually, and yet we see them not. We walk with our heads aloft, but it is they who guide us; our minds may will, but it is they who control our minds. Therefore, hear my counsel, though it speaks not with an airy voice, but with a woman's tongue."

"I hear—I obey," answered Ulva, tremblingly.

"There are two spirits which govern man—ambition and love. The first is ever strongest, except in those pure and noble natures which seem less human than divine. Let the sound of battle rouse the young Viking from his dream. Let him dye the seas purple with his enemies' blood, and then Odin will be appeased. The fierce shout of northern victory will drown the beguiling whisper of a false woman's lips, and the son of Hialmar will rejoice again in the bold faith of his fathers."

News came to Jarl Olof, that the King of Upsala was about to fall upon him with fire and sword. How the rumor reached him, the young Viking knew not, and for a long time he scarcely heeded it, but sunned himself in the placid, tender smile, that day by day was melting the frost off his stern northern heart—the smile of Hermolin. But then, as time passed on, the nurse, Ulva, ever seemed to stand between the husband and wife. Olof shrank from the bitterness of the proud,

mocking eye, which had exercised a strange influence over him from his childhood; and sometimes, too, her tongue cast out its sharp, pointed stings, even among the honey-words which she still used towards the son of her care.

When the spring came on, the young Viking yearned for his olden life of free warfare. He would fain forestall the taunts of the King of Upsala, and requite his unreasoning words with deeds; and though Hermolin shuddered at her lord's danger, and prayed him not to enter on a sinful and causeless war, still he refused to hearken. And so the sails were set, the vessel danced over the waters, and Hermolin was left to the bitterness of that first parting. A parting it was, not like that when soul is knitted unto soul, to cling in true faith and love, through distance and absence, and time—nay, even through that life-severance which drops the veil of immortality between flesh and spirit—but it was a separation when a few leagues, a few weeks, are sundrance enough to blot out the past, and form a bar between the two to which the perfect bond of union is unknown. Therefore, when Hermolin saw her lord's ship fade like a speck upon the seas, it seemed as though the first dawning dream of Olof's affection faded too, and she became overwhelmed with the burthen of lonely love.

Oh, meek woman's heart, content with so little and giving so much, who shall requite thee? Yet what guerdon needest thou, to whom the act of loving is alone bliss, and hope, and strength? Go on thy way, thou true one, and wait until the end.

The Viking's ship returned in triumph, laden with prey. Hermolin, when she flew to her lord and nestled in his breast, shedding joyful tears, forgot all but the bliss of Olof restored to her love. She sat with him in his hall of state while he apportioned the spoil, and decided the fortune of the captives; and while the duty pained her gentle heart, and almost wrung her conscience, Hermolin strove to stifle all other feelings for the love she bore to him, and comfort herself in everything as became the wife of the great northern Jarl.

Among the captives was a man who, standing behind the rest, directed every glance of his piercing eyes towards the Viking's wife. Chains weighed down his small spare limbs, and his frame was worn and wasted; yet still, the lightnings of those wondrous eyes glittered above the ruins made by time. At last the prisoners were dismissed—all but this man. Olof glanced carelessly at him; but Hermolin beheld only the face of her lord, until the stern reply to the Jarl's question attracted her notice.

"My name, wouldst thou, son of Hjalmar? Ask thy wife; she knows it well, if her heart has not lost its home-memories, as her tongue its southern speech. Hermolin, are thine eyes too proud to look upon Ansgarius?"

Trembling, half with fear and half with joy, Hermolin sprang forward, and would have fallen at his feet, but Olof restrained her.

"Child, what is this rude beggar to thee? Thou forgettest thyself," he said.

Break, struggling heart, whom fearful love makes weaker still! What shouldst thou do? Helplessly, Hermolin sank back, and hid her face from the eyes of the monk.

"Is it even so?" cried Ansgarius. "Then may the curse —"

But while the terrible words were yet half-formed, he caught Hermolin's wild, imploring glance, and saw that, half hidden beneath the robe, her fingers closed despairingly over Ulrika's cross.

"God judge thee, I dare not," he added more softly, in the Provençal tongue. "Oh, daughter of my love, that I should meet thee with almost a curse on my lips! But no! it shall be a blessing—it must be, thou child of many prayers!"

The softened tone, the long-forgotten tongue, pierced the heart of the Jarl's wife. She sank on her knees and sobbed. Olof looked at her, half wondering, half angrily.

"Forgive me, my lord, my beloved! But this man's speech is that of my own far land, and it makes me weep," she answered.

"As thou wilt, as thou wilt," answered Olof, coldly; "but thy tears should flow alone. Prisoner, leave the hall."

And as the followers of the Viking removed Ansgarius, the Jarl strode carelessly from his wife's presence, without another glance at her drooping and grief-stricken form.

"Oh, Mother of Mercies!" cried Hermolin, "did I pray for this joyful day and my lord's return, and lo! it is a time of bitterness and woe! And thou, the strong-hearted, bold-tongued, thou wilt be slain, Ansgarius, it may be by the hand of my Olof! Holy Mother of Consolation, all is darkness before me! I faint! I die! Oh, guide me through the gloom!"

Wait, thou tried and patient one. "At evening-tide it shall be light;" wait and pray.

Olof sat at night, dreaming alone over the fire-light in his hall, when he heard the voice of Ulva whispering in his ear—

"Is the Jarl sleeping while his wife is opening the prison doors? Why should my Lord Olof waste his strength and shed his blood to take captives, when the Lady Hermolin sets them free?"

Olof, half roused from his slumber spoke angrily—

"Ulva, hold thy peace! Hermolin is asleep in the chamber."

"Come and see;" and the nurse, strong in her influence, led Olof to his wife's deserted room.

"A loving welcome for a long-absent lord!" said the sneering voice; "and it was no pale vision I saw gliding, lamp in hand, until it entered the prison of the southern captive, at the sight of whom she wept this morn, as I heard from her maidens."

"Woman!" thundered Olof, "one word more against my pure wife, and I slay thee with this

hand. It was a priest, a vowed, gray-headed priest of her faith."

"And therefore thou wilt save him from death, and load him with honors! Son of Hjalmar, on thy father's tomb the phantom light burns yet, but thick darkness will fall over thine. Hjalmar was the last of Odin's heroes; Olof will sing psalms in the Christian's heaven."

"Never!" cried the young Jarl. "To the prison, that the priest may meet his doom!"

Silently and stealthily as death, Olof and Ulva entered; and the keeper of the dungeon, looking on his chief's face of stern resolve, prayed Odin to save from harm that gentle southern lady whom all revered and obeyed—knowing how pure and meek she was, and how dearly she loved her lord.

Hermolin was standing before Ansgarius. He awoke from his calm, holy sleep, and thought it had been the presence of an angel. But when she knelt at his feet weeping, and lifted up the mournful, Esau-like cry—"Bless me, even me also, O my father!"—then the stern missionary knew that it was the child whom he had taught, the young soul whom he had trained for the great work for which he believed it chosen.

"And God may fulfil that destiny yet, since thou hast not belied thy faith even among the heathen," said Ansgarius, when he had listened to her life's history since she left the shores of Provence. "He may turn even this darkness into light. Heaven works not as we. When the good King Louis of France sent me to Upsala, the glad bearer of the holy cross, I thought it was Heaven's call, and I went. And when thy lord's vessel took us captive on the seas, I bowed my head and said, 'God knoweth best. It may be that he leads me where the furrows are ripe for the seed,' and therefore, even here, in this dark prison, I rejoice to sing for joy."

"But if danger should come, if thy blood should be poured out upon this wild land?"

"It will be but as the early rain to soften the hard ground," said Ansgarius, with a calm smile. "And God will find himself another and a worthier husbandman, to follow after, and plant, and water, until the land be filled with increase."

So talked the son of Ulrika. O, blessed mother, whose prayers had thus brought forth such glorious fruit! And then, all unconscious of the presence of others, the two knelt down in the prison, like the saints of old, and prayed. The strong, fearless man of faith, the meek and gentle woman, were types of the two foundations on which the early church was laid—the spirit of holy boldness and the spirit of love!

Ulva and the son of Hjalmar stood silent and motionless in the darkness, and heard all.

Then Hermolin arose, and Olof's name came to her lips with a heavy sigh.

"My heart is sore even to deceive him thus," she said. "I would not, save for thee. Must it be ever so, that my faith to Heaven must war

with the dear love I bear my lord—my true—my noble Olof!"

Ansgarius looked surprised; his strong heart, engrossed in one life-purpose, had no room for human love. He understood it not. Even Hermolin had been to him only the instrument wherewith to work out his end.

"Dost thou love him so?" he said, in a compassionate tone. "Poor child—happier are those who give Heaven all. Now, my daughter, leave me to pray. Who knoweth how soon death may come from the hands of these godless men?"

Hermolin threw herself on the ground at his feet. "Oh, my father, my father, thou shalt not die," was her agonized cry. "If thou wouldst fly, the night is dark—my lord sleeps."

Ansgarius turned round, and fixed upon her his gaze of stern reproof.

"A wife deceives her husband—a Christian dare not confess to his God. Is it for this that we brought the cross into the land?"

"No, no," Hermolin said—"thou must stay, and God will protect thee, O, my father! Olof—my Olof—I love thee—I trust thee—I will pray night and day that this sin may be kept from thy soul."

And while Hermolin called on her lord's name, Olof came forward and stood before them both. His face was very pale, but there was in it a beauty and a softness that resembled the young saint of the convent. His presence caused no fear, only an awe-struck silence. Then Olof spoke—

"Priest, I brought this sword to drink thy life's blood. I lay it now at thy feet. It shall not be said that the son of Odin was less noble than his Christian foe. Hermolin!"

She sprang to his arms—she clung there, and they folded round her as in that first embrace when the young bridegroom stood at the convent gate; and Hermolin felt that even the wild devotion of the maiden was as nothing to the fulness of the wife's love.

The prison doors closed on the retreating footsteps of three. But there was one who stayed behind, unnoticed in the darkness, gnashing her teeth, and cursing the day when a Christian foot first entered Odin's land.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE was again a footstep on the snow mountains, and Ulva once more poured out her passionate soul at the feet of the strange priestess of the Nornir.

"The darkness gathers," she cried. "Odin has turned away his face from the land. Accursed be the victory that brought the Christian captive to our shores. My lord turned his foot aside; he would not crush the worm, and lo, it is growing into a serpent, whose venomous folds will fill the land. Already our warriors listen to the Christian priest, with his wily tongue. Already the worshippers desert Odin's fane; while the poor,

the helpless, the weak, women and children, lift up their hands to another God than the great ruler of Asgard. And Jarl Olof heeds not though his people cast scorn on the faith of his fathers. Svenska, thou wisest one, who hearest the voice of the Nornir, inquire what may be the end of this terrible change that is coming over the land!"

Svenska answered not, but pointed silently to the place where the three rocks stood. Ulva remained at a distance, while the priestess performed her strange rites. The sound of her clear, shrill voice came borne on the air, rising at times into a cry, more like that of a soul in despair than a woman's tone. It seemed to pierce the heart of the Norsewoman. She grovelled on the earth, burying her head among the snows.

"My Svenska—my beloved—my soul's child," she moaned, "oh, that I could take thee to this heart, and feel thine own answer to it with human throbs. But I dare not—the pure soul would scorn the impure. Great Odin, if the sin was great, how heavy is the punishment!"

When after a time she lifted up her head, Svenska stood before her.

"Have the Nornir spoken?" asked Ulva, scarcely daring to look upon the face of the Daughter of the Snows.

"They utter no voice; but I feel them in my soul," said Svenska. "It is a terrible call; yet I must answer. Listen! The last of the race of Hjalmar must not bring shame on his fathers. If Jarl Olof be left to yield to the persuasions of a woman, and the guile of a priest, the faith of Odin will vanish from the land."

"And how, O Svenska, can we sway the son of Hjalmar that this evil may not come?"

The face of the young priestess was strangely convulsed; and when, after a while, she spoke, her voice was like an icy whisper.

"I told thee once that there were two ruling spirits in man—ambition and love. With Olof, one has fallen powerless—the other yet remains. The spell of human passion must stand between the Jarl and his doom—the doom of those who despise the might of Odin."

A wild light shone in Ulva's fierce eyes.

"Would that it might be so—that a northern maid might tread under foot the dark-browed Hermolin, torture her, soul and body, until she died, unloved, unpitied. But our pure maidens cast not their eyes on another woman's lord, and who is there to win Olof from Hermolin?"

"I!"

Ulva uttered a cry, almost of agony. "Thou, my beautiful—my pure one—white-souled as the snows that name thee—thou to stoop to earth's sin—to be made the sacrifice," she muttered hoarsely.

It seemed as though a fallen spirit had entered that marble statue, and animated its pale beauty with a power new and terrible to behold. Svenska lifted her arms upwards, and cried with a wild vehemence—

"Dread Nornir, I feel around me the threads

ye weave; they draw my feet onward, and whither they lead I go. Never shall the worship of Odin fall before that of the Christian's God. I devote myself to shame—to sin which the sacrifice makes holy—that the dwellers in Asgard may still look down upon the land, and the children of the north may not turn aside from the faith of their fathers."

Ulva sank at Svenska's feet, folded them in her arms, and kissed them passionately. Then she rose up, and followed the steps of the priestess in silence. Only as they passed the three rock statues her agony burst forth in a low moaning—

"Terrible Nornir, sin avengers, to whom, as atonement, I devoted this child, ye have made the precious gift an arrow to pierce my soul!"

The Jarl Olof came home from a bear-hunt, carrying with him a strange prize. He had found in the snows a maiden, white and pale, and almost lifeless, yet of unearthly beauty. Gradually the soul awakened in that lovely form, and looked at Olof from out the heavenly eyes. His own answered to it with a vague pleasure, and sweet in his ear sounded the voice which uttered musically the accents of the Norse tongue. The young Jarl himself bore the weak and fainting form for many weary leagues, until he brought the beautiful desolate one to the presence of his wife, and laid her in Hermolin's chamber.

Hermolin bent over her in pity and amaze. She, too, was penetrated to the very soul with that dazzling and wondrous beauty—so spiritual, and yet so human—so divine, and yet so womanly. The Jarl's wife twined her fingers among the pale amber tresses with almost childlike admiration, and gazed wistfully on the white, round arms and graceful throat, beneath whose marble purity a faint rose-hue began to steal, while the life-current again wandered through the blue delicate veins.

"Olof, how beautiful she is—like one of the angels, which I used to see in my childish dreams. How happy it must be to know one's self so fair." And a light sigh thrilled Hermolin's bosom.

Olof did not answer; his eyes, too—nay, his whole soul, drank in the beauty of which Hermolin spoke. The wife saw it, and again she sighed.

Far behind the group stood one who beheld the gaze, and heard the sigh, and Ulva's heart throbbed with fierce exultation, for she saw from afar the rising of that little cloud.

Months passed away, and still the stranger maiden cast the magic of her superhuman beauty over the halls of the Viking. Asluaga, when she came forth from the harp, like a spirit of light, or when she stood before Ragnar Lodbrog, enchaining the wild sea-king with the spells of a lovely soul in a lovely form—Asluaga herself was not more omnipotent in power than was the strange daughter of the snows. And day by day, over Svenska's beauty there crept a new charm—a softness and all-subduing womanliness, that endowed with life and warmth the once passionless form. The spell thrilled through Olof's whole nature, and his soul

bent like a reed before the storm of wild emotions that swept over him.

Oh, thou pure angel, who weepest all alone, on whom has faded the light of that dearest smile—who seest each day the love wane, though an innate nobleness still makes duty keep its place in the heart where it was thy heaven to rest! Hermolin! will thy love fail now?—will it sink in the trial, or will it forget itself and its own wrongs, and watch over the sinner with tenderness and prayers, until it bring him back in forgiveness, repentance, and peace?

Listen how that faithful, patient heart answers the bitterness which the stern monk pours out against the erring one who is tempted to betray such love.

"My father," said Hermolin, when Ansgarius would fain have dealt out reproaches and threatenings against her husband—"my father, condemn him not yet. It is a bitter struggle; he is tempted sore. How sweet her smile is!—how glorious her beauty!—while I, alas! alas!—I have only love to give him. And then she is from his own North, and she speaks to him of his fathers, and her wild nature governs his. Oh, my Olof! that I could be all this—that I could make myself more like thee—more worthy to win thy love."

And when the inflexible spirit of Ansgarius, in justly condemning the sin, shut out all compassion for the sinner, Hermolin only wept.

"Oh, father, have pity on him—on me. He did love me once—he will love me yet. I will be patient; and love is so strong to bear—so omnipotent in prayers; Heaven will keep him from sin, and I shall win him back. Olof, my Olof! God will not let me die, until thou lovest me as I have loved, as I do love thee—my soul's soul!—my life's blessing!"

And ere the words were well uttered, an angel carried them to heaven, and then cast them down again, like an echo, upon the spirit of him who had won such love. The invisible influence fell upon him, even though he stood alone with Svenska, overwhelmed with the delirium of her presence.

She had enchained his soul; she had drawn from his lips the avowal of wild and sinful passion; she had strengthened her power over him, by bringing into the earthly bond all the influences of their ancient faith, to which she had won him back; and now, her end gained, Svenska quailed before the tempest she had raised.

What power was it which had changed the priestess, who once cast her arms to heaven with that terrible vow, into the trembling woman who dared not look on Olof's face; and who, even in her triumphant joy, shrank before the wild energy of his words.

He promised her that her heart's desire should be accomplished—that no Christian prayer should be heard in Odin's land—that the monk and his proselytes should be swept from the face of the earth.

Why was it, O Svenska, that even then, when

the flash of triumph had passed from thine eyes, they sank towards earth, and thy pale lips quivered like a weak girl's?

"There is one thing more, Olof, and then I give thee my love," she said. "The shadow is passing, and Odin's smile will again brighten our shores; but the land is still defiled—blood only can make it pure; there must be a sacrifice."

Her voice rose, her stature dilated, and Svenska was again the inspired of the Nornir. As Olof beheld her, even his own bold spirit quailed beneath the terrible strength of hers.

"There must be a sacrifice," she repeated in yet more vehement tones. "In the dark night a voice haunts me, and the words are ever the same; when I look on the snow-mountains, I see there traces of blood, which never pass away. Odin demands the offering, and will not be appeased. Olof! I am thine when thou hast given up the victim!"

"Who?" murmured Olof, instinctively drooping his face beneath the glare of those terrible eyes.

She stooped over him; her soft breath swept his cheek; her fair serpent lips approached his ear; they uttered one name—"Hermolin!"

He sprang from her side with a shuddering cry. One moment he covered his eyes, as though to shut out some horrible sight, and then the tempted stood face to face with the tempter. The veil had fallen; he beheld in her now, not the beautiful beguiler, but the ghastly impersonation of the meditated sin. It stood revealed, the crime in all its black deformity; it hissed at him in that perfumed breath; it scorched him in the lightnings of those lustrous eyes. Horror-stricken and dumb, he gazed, until at last his lips formed themselves into the echo of that one word—"Hermolin!"

It fell like a sunburst upon his clouded spirit, and, rifling through that blackest darkness, Olof beheld the light. He sprang towards it; for there was yet a beauty and a nobleness in the young Northman's soul—how else could Hermolin have loved him? Through the silent hall rang that name—bursting from the husband's lips and heart—first as a murmur, then as a wild, yearning cry—"Hermolin! Hermolin!"

Surely it was an angel who bore that call to the wife's ear—who guided her feet all unwittingly to where her beloved wrestled with that deadly sin. Lo! as it were in answer to his voice, Hermolin stood at the entrance of the hall. Olof glanced at Svenska; her gleaming eyes, her writhing lips, and her beauty, seemed changed to the likeness of a fiend. And there, soft-smiling on him, with the meek, loving face of old, leaned Hermolin, her arms stretched out, as if to welcome him, in forgiveness and peace, to the shelter of that pure breast.

He fled there. There was a cry such as rarely bursts from man's lips—"Hermolin, Hermolin, save me!" and the proud one knelt at her feet, hiding his face in her garments, pressing her pure hands upon his eyes, as though to shut out the sight of the lure which so nearly led him on to a fearful sin.

Hermolin asked nought, said nought—but she folded her arms round his neck; she knelt beside him, and drew his head to her bosom, as a mother would a beloved and repentant child. Then she whispered softly, "Olof, my Olof, come!" and led him away, his hand still clinging for safety and guidance to that faithful one of hers; and his eyes never daring to turn away from that face, which looked on him like an angel's from out of heaven, full of love so holy, so complete, that pardon itself had no place there.

Svenska stood beholding them, and still and fixed as stone, until Olof's form passed from her sight; then she fell to the earth without a cry or sound.

Ulva's breast was soon her pillow—Ulva, who haunted her steps like a shadow. No mother's fondness could have poured out more passionate words over the insensible form; but when the shadow of seeming death left the beautiful face, her manner became again that of distant and reverent tenderness.

"Priestess of the Nornir, awake!" she said. "Let the curse of Odin fall: we will go far hence into the wild mountains, and leave the race of Hialmar to perish. The vow was vain; but Nornir were not wholly pitiless. No shame has fallen upon thee, pure Daughter of the Snows!"

Svenska heard not—regarded not. Drawing herself away from all support, the young priestess stood erect. She spoke not to Ulva, but uttering her thoughts aloud—

"Dread Nornir! is this your will? Ye deceived me—nay, but I beguiled myself. How could evil work out good? Odin scorns the unholy offering; the sinful vow brings its own punishment. Olof, Olof! whom I came to betray, I love thee, as my own soul I love thee, and in vain."

It was no more the priestess, but a desolate, despairing woman who lay there on the cold ground, and moaned in uncontrollable anguish. Ulva, stung to the heart, gazed on her without a word. The day of requital had come at last.

When the misty light of day changed into the star-lit beauty of a northern night, a clear sound pierced the silence of the hall. It was the Christian vesper-hymn, led by a fresh young voice, through whose melody trembled a tone of almost angelic gladness—the voice of Hermolin. Svenska, aroused from her trance, sprang madly on her feet.

"Olof, Olof," she cried, "the curse of Odin will fall; they will beguile thy soul, and I shall never see thee after death in the blessed dwellings of the Æser. Is there no help—no atonement? Ah!" she continued, and her voice suddenly rose from the shrillness of despair to the full tone of joy—"I see it now. Odin! thy will is clear: mine ear heard truly—mine eye saw plain. The sacrifice—it shall be offered still, and Odin's wrath be turned away. To the mountain, to the mountain, to the mountain!—son of Hialmar, son of Hialmar! I will yet await thee in the Valhalla of thy fathers."

She darted from the hall, and bounded away with the speed of the wind. Night and day, night and day, far up in the mountains, did Ulva follow that flying form, until at times she thought it was only the spirit of the priestess that still flitted on before her sight. At last she came to a wild ravine, in which lay a frozen sea of snow; on its verge stood that white shadow, with the outstretched arms, and the amber-floating hair.

As Ulva looked, there grew on the stillness a sound like the roaring of the sea; and a mighty snow-billow, loosened from its mountain-cave, came heaving on: nearer, nearer it drew, and the pale shape was there still; it passed, and the Daughter of the Snows slept beneath them.

The Daughter of the Snows!—whence, then, that shriek of mother's agony, the last that ever parted Ulva's lips—"My child, my child!" Let Death, the great veiler of mysteries, keep until eternity one dread secret more!

D. M. M.

[Having read the foregoing, see Longfellow's ballad—"The Skeleton in Armor."—LIV. AGE.]

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A SMALL pocket volume, containing some sixty short lyrical poems, by various English writers, old and modern, from the Earl of Surrey to Coleridge. Each page is enclosed in a linear border, and on one side ornamented with a grotesque design, after the manner of the grotesques in the Vatican. The designs are printed in colors from wooden blocks. The uniformity in size, a certain smallness, and the whiteness of the paper, give an air of poverty and monotony to the ornamental part of the book; though it cannot be denied that some of the designs are pleasing. Altogether, the volume is an agreeable pocket companion.—*Spectator*.

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COUNT D'ORSAY'S PICTURE OF OUR SAVIOUR.—A picture of Christ by Count d'Orsay! And truly, as pictures go, the gay count has produced a work that might take its place among some of the least discreditable to our Royal Academy. It has been painted perhaps not without an eye to the mirror; the maxim that the artist appears in his work is at least as true as usual. Faults might be found—but they are not peculiar to the count; and he pays us the compliment of adopting the faults of the English school rather than the French—the abstracted expression, the feeble drawing, and the heavy coloring. But there is some solemnity in this new and unforeseen aspect of Count d'Orsay, and much pattern beauty. Mr. Richard Lane is making a lithograph of the painting; which he has copied with his usual skill.—*Spectator*.

For the Living Age.

SONNET

ON MRS. FRANCES KEMBLE BUTLER'S READINGS OF SHAKSPEARE.

BY MILTON praised, what higher praise is found ?

For he, unrivalled poet and undefiled,

Commended few, yet none in pride reviled ;

His harp sublime one name doth chiefly sound,

A name, like his, known through the world around :

He spoke of "sweetest SHAKSPEARE, fancy's child,"

Warbling in joy "his native wood-notes wild,"

And in his song hath made his name rebound.

If other honor SHAKSPEARE could desire,

It might be—in a distant age and clime,

Beyond the western deep, in new empire,—

That some unequalled Warbler, in her prime,

All his wild notes most heartily should sing,

In myriad ears enthralled and wondering !

March 12, 1849.

ARION.

—
ANOTHER.

From the Transcript.

O PRECIOUS evenings ! all too swiftly sped !

Leaving us heirs to such rich heritages

Of all the best thoughts of the greatest sages,

And giving tongues unto the silent dead !

How our hearts glowed and trembled as she read ;

Interpreting by tones the wondrous pages

Of the great poet who foreruns the ages,

Anticipating all that shall be said.

O happy Reader ! having for thy text

The magic book, whose Sybilline leaves have caught

The rarest essence of all human thought !

O happy Poet ! by no critic vex !

How must thy listening spirit now rejoice

To be interpreted by such a voice !

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

Cambridge, Feb. 20th, 1849.

[Correspondence of the Springfield Republican.]

MRS. BUTLER'S READINGS.

Boston, Feb. 5, 1849.

MRS. PIERCE BUTLER, as she announces herself in her card, or Fanny Kemble Butler, as her early admirers loved to call her, is creating quite a sensation in this city, by her readings from Shakspeare. She has now given some five or six, and intends to continue them up to thirty ; for they are reaping for her not only fame but fortune. Masonic Temple, where she gives her entertainments, is crowded to overflowing at every reading. The tickets are exhausted some thirty-six to forty-eight hours before the time arrives, and hundreds, both strangers and citizens, are disappointed in their efforts to gain admittance. Each reading nets her from \$250 to \$300, which, at three a week, (she gave four last week,) would produce \$750 to \$900, clear of all expenses. Her thirty readings would thus net her, at the lowest estimate, \$7,500. And, of course, she will not be suffered to stop here. Already, there are calls for her from New York and other places.

Last Friday evening, through the kindness of a friend, (all the tickets having been taken up early on Thursday morning,) I had the pleasure of hearing her.

The coming of the lady was heralded by an elderly gentleman placing a chair behind the little red covered desk on the platform, which constituted all the stage of the performer. Two large volumes of Shakspeare were laid on the desk, and the buzz of conversation that had filled the hall ceased.

Presently Mrs. Butler made her appearance, as from a trap-door near the platform, and, escorted by Charles Sumner, she took her place behind the desk. She was elegantly dressed, as if for a ball, wearing a rich silk, with short sleeves and low neck ; the vacuity being supplied by a superabundance of flowing lace work. Bowing with infinite grace, she put back with her hand her dark and glossy hair, (which was dressed with elegant plainness,) and with slightly affected emotion said, "I have the honor to read the Merchant of Venice." Then taking her seat, and just reading the list of characters, she entered at once upon the play.

And now, how shall I describe the beauty, the power, and the genius displayed by this woman, by which for two entire hours, but with a short intermission at the middle, she kept her large audience bound in almost breathless silence, interrupted only by spontaneous outbreaks of applause, which it was impossible to restrain ? I could not have believed before that a single human voice was able, by the simple reading of a play, to produce such an effect. Not only was the utterance clear, distinct, and eloquent, but the feelings of each actor were represented most admirably, in the voice, expression, manner, and gestures of the reader. One moment, she was the fiendish Shylock, and rage, hate, and vengeance ruled in her countenance and her voice ; the next, the calm, kind, Christian Antonio, submissive to his fate, was counterfeited ; again she was sweet Portia, describing her lovers to her maid, acting the judge with dignity and wisdom, and tantalizing her husband with the loss of the ring which he had vowed to keep till death. The manner in which these memorable lines were pronounced, was above panegyric ; every syllable fell upon the ears of an almost breathless auditory :

The quality of mercy is not strained ;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven,
Upon the place beneath ; it is twice bless'd ;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes ;
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest : it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown :
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway—
It is an attribute to God himself ;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice.

The next forenoon, (Saturday) she repeated "Midsummer's Night Dream," which she had previously given at one of her evening readings. I was again a delighted listener. She succeeded even better, if possible, in this than in the "Merchant of Venice." Every variety of passion, every shade of character, was portrayed with a faithfulness and vigor that showed the master mind, the genius and the acquirements of the reader, in a manner to astonish even those most accustomed to the representations of the best actors that ever walked upon the stage. Her appreciation of the several characters who acted "the most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe," was exquisitely life-like. So of Puck, Helena, Hermia, and all, indeed. There was a satirical sting in her voice, as she said :

By all the vows that ever men have broke ;
In number more than ever woman spoke,

that made the words cut deep. But as her hearers were mostly ladies, I fear it was in a great degree lost. On this occasion, she was led to her seat by Judge Byington, of the Common Pleas Court, and had substituted for her gay array of the previous evening, a rich dark velvet dress, high in the neck, with a row of silver bell buttons down in front.

From the Quarterly Review.

*Nineveh and its Remains.** By AUSTEN HENRY LAYARD, Esq., D. C. L. 2 vols. London, 1848.

WE opened Mr. Layard's volumes, eager to resume our researches into the antiquities of those almost pre-historic cities, Nineveh and her vassals, which seem to have surrounded her on nearly every side; to assist in the disinterment of the palaces of the mythic Nimrod, Ninus, and Semiramis, which had perished from the face of the earth before the days of the later Hebrew prophets, and which, after a slumber of between 2000 and 3000 years, are for the first time brought again to light in the nineteenth century. Our interest had been deepened by the sight of the few specimens of Mr. Layard's treasures which had then been placed in the British Museum; still more by the Khorasabad sculptures sent to Paris by Monsieur Botta. Till within the last two months only the smaller bas-reliefs from Nimroud had reached England. Since that time a second portion has arrived, including the black marble obelisk. These articles, by the negligence or unwarrantable curiosity (we are unwilling to use stronger terms) of persons at Bombay, have suffered considerable damage, though by no means to the extent represented in the public journals. Some of the smaller ones, particularly those of glass, having been carelessly repacked, were found broken to atoms; some, "including the most valuable specimens," (these are Mr. Layard's words,) were missing—it is to be hoped not purloined by some over-tempted collector. Meantime the larger and more massive pieces are still reposing on the mud-beach of Basora. We trust that, even in these economic days, means will be found to transport them immediately to England, with positive orders to treat them with greater respect at Bombay. These (the huge lion and bull) we expect to turn out by far the most remarkable and characteristic specimens of Assyrian art. We judge by those at Paris, where there are some, especially one colossal figure, which, though temporarily stowed away in a small room on the ground-floor in the Louvre, impressed us with a strange gigantic majesty, a daringness of conception, which was in no way debased by the barbaric rudeness of the execution, and on the other hand enhanced by its singular symbolic attributes. It is that kind of statue which it takes away one's breath to gaze on.

We found, therefore, not without some slight feeling of disappointment, or rather of impatience, that although we were speedily to commence our operations in disinterring these mysterious palaces, we were to be interrupted by the negotiations, and intrigues, and difficulties, which embarrassed all Mr. Layard's proceedings; and then, before much had been accomplished, carried away to accompany Mr. Layard in excursions in the neighborhood, and indeed to some distance from the scene of his labors; we were to wander among the wild tribes of various manners, and still more various creeds,

which people the districts to the west and north-west of the Tigris. But our impatience rapidly disappeared in such stirring and amusing companionship. We found in Mr. Layard not merely an industrious and persevering discoverer in this new field of antiquities, but an eastern traveller, distinguished, we may say, beyond almost all others, by the freshness, vigor, and simplicity of his narrative; by an extraordinary familiarity with the habits and manners of these wild tribes, which might seem almost intuitive, but is, we soon perceive, the result of long and intimate acquaintance, and perfect command of the language. No one has shown in an equal degree the power of adapting himself at once and completely, without surrendering the acknowledged superiority of the Frank, to the ordinary life of the Asiatic. Mr. Layard, without effort, teaches us more, and in a more light and picturesque manner, even than D'Arvieux; he seems as trustworthy, though far more lively and dramatic than Burckhardt. It is hardly too much to say that the history of the excavations and revelations, of his management of the Turkish rulers, of the wild chiefs whom the intelligence of his strange proceedings brought around him, of the laboring Arabs and Chaldeans whom he employed in his works, and the removal of the sculptures, with their embarkation on the Tigris, is as interesting as the discoveries themselves; while during the necessary suspension of his toil among the ruins, we are content to follow him into the villages of the Mohammedans, Nestorian Christians, and Devil-worshippers, as if these were the sole or primary objects of his travels.

Mr. Layard must excuse us if we acknowledge that he has irresistibly awakened our curiosity as to his own early history. How is it that a young Englishman has gained this peculiar power of ruling and wielding for his own purposes the intractable Asiatic mind; how has he learned to be firm and resolute, yielding and conciliatory, always at the right time; to be liberal where he should be, and to withhold his bounty when demanded by a powerful marauder under the civil name of a gift; to resist the temptation of courting mistimed or misplaced popularity, yet to attach to himself all whose attachment could be valuable or useful; to parry deceit by courteous phrases, to out-hyperbolize oriental flattery—without any of the meanness of falsehood; to show that he fully understood these trickeries of oriental adulation—without giving offence; quietly to maintain and to enforce respect for European, for English truth, honesty, and justice; to be the friend of the oppressed, without being the declared enemy of the oppressor! All this implies a large experience, as well as a happy aptitude for assuming foreign habits—long usage as well as intuitive sagacity. We are inclined therefore to think that if Mr. Layard had chosen to begin the history of his adventures some time before the first notion of making researches on the Assyrian plains had dawned upon his mind, (in 1839–40,) at all events before he commenced his actual operations—

*This work is now in press by Mr. G. P. Putnam, New York, and is very nearly ready for publication.

in 1845, he might have given us some features of Asiatic life in other quarters, not less curious, original, and instructive, than those which transpire in the course of his present proceedings. His papers on the sites of certain ancient cities, in the *Journal of the Geographical Society*, show that he has travelled far and seen much beyond the course of the Tigris; and passages in the present work occasionally betray that the wandering tribes now introduced to our knowledge are not the first with whom Mr. Layard has lived on intimate terms, with whom he has thrown off all but the open and honorable character of the Frank, and kept up that acknowledged intellectual superiority, which, when not insolently or arbitrarily proclaimed, is sure to meet with its proper homage. We read, for instance, (p. 89,) after the description of a large tribe breaking up when migrating to new pastures:—"The scene caused in me feelings of melancholy, for it recalled many hours, perhaps unprofitably, though certainly happily spent; and many friends, some who now sighed in captivity for the joyous freedom which those wandering hordes enjoyed; others who had perished in its defence." In another place (p. 168) we find old habits, either of throwing the jerid, or of mingling in more serious frays, "making him forget his dignity, and join in this mimic war with his own attendants and some Kurdish horsemen." We notice these things as explaining, as well as guaranteeing, the truth, and so justifying our perfect reliance on the account of the mastery which Mr. Layard acquired over the Arab mind. These hours, if our readers are disposed to appreciate as highly as we do the value of his Assyrian discoveries, were not spent unprofitably, because, by the experience which they gave, by the skill thus acquired, Mr. Layard has been able to achieve what few Europeans under the same circumstances could have achieved—to persuade these unruly children of the desert to labor hard and with the utmost cheerfulness in his and in our service, and all for their own good. He made them feel at once that they were engaged in the service of an employer, whose object was not to wring the utmost toil out of their weary frames, and then wrest away the price of their labors: that it was his purpose, besides the fair payment of their wages, to promote in every manner their happiness and improvement.

We must, however, wait patiently for whatever Mr. Layard may by and by be encouraged to give us of the details of his own earlier life in the east, content, meantime, with taking him up at the period to which these volumes distinctly refer. A former journey into the regions about the Tigris had awakened in his mind the strongest desire to make researches among the vast and mysterious mounds, those barrows it might seem of great cities, which rose in so many quarters, and which appeared not to have been violated by the scrutinizing hand of man for centuries beyond centuries. He had already surveyed the remains of more modern nations, on whom nevertheless we are accustomed to look as of remote antiquity. The

emotions kindled by the strong contrast between the aspect of Grecian ruins and that of the shapeless sepulchres of the eastern cities, are described in the following impressive passage:—

Were the traveller to cross the Euphrates to seek for such ruins in Mesopotamia and Chaldaea as he had left behind him in Asia Minor or Syria, his search would be vain. The graceful column rising above the thick foliage of the myrtle, the ilex, and the oleander; the gradines of the amphitheatre covering the gentle slope, and overlooking the dark blue waters of a lake-like bay; the richly-carved cornice or capital half-hidden by the luxuriant herbage; are replaced by the stern shapeless mound rising like a hill from the scorched plain, the fragments of pottery, and the stupendous mass of brickwork occasionally laid bare by the winter-rains. He has left the land where nature is still lovely, where, in his mind's eye, he can rebuild the temple or the theatre, half doubting whether they would have made a more grateful impression upon the senses than the ruin before him. He is now at a loss to give any form to the rude heaps upon which he is gazing. Those of whose works they are the remains, unlike the Roman and the Greek, have left no visible traces of their civilization, or of their arts; their influence has long since passed away. The more he conjectures the more vague the results appear. The scene around is worthy of the ruin he is contemplating; desolation meets desolation; a feeling of awe succeeds to wonder; for there is nothing to relieve the mind, to lead to hope, or to tell of what has gone by. These huge mounds of Assyria made a deeper impression upon me, gave rise to more serious thought and more earnest reflection, than the temples of Balbec or the theatres of Ionia.—Vol. i., pp. 6, 7.

The success of M. Botta in his researches at Khorsabad, detailed in the 158th number of our journal, roused still further the generous emulation of Mr. Layard. But he must have continued to brood over the vain yearnings of his antiquarian ambition, and to suppress his baffled curiosity, had it not happened that the English ambassador at Constantinople observed and apprehended the energetic character and abilities of his young countryman, and, entirely at his own hazard, placed funds at his disposal which would enable him at least to carry on to some extent these tempting researches. Mr. Layard gratefully and properly recalls to the remembrance of the country, the great debt of gratitude which it owes to that accomplished minister, for proceeding in many instances far beyond the bounds of his commission—for being ever ready to risk his private resources, in order to secure for England such treasures as the marbles of Halicarnassus—and now the remains of a city which had perished perhaps long before Halicarnassus was in being. The whole affair attests strongly the generosity, influence, and prudence of Sir Stratford Canning—and shows how well the British court is represented at the Ottoman Porte.

Thus unexpectedly furnished with funds, but, through the jealousy of certain parties, whose proceedings he contrasts with the enlightened and liberal spirit of M. Botta, obliged to act with

great caution and secrecy, Mr. Layard lost no time in setting forth on his coveted mission. He arrived on the banks of the Tigris in October, 1845. We do not propose to follow him in every step of his progress. Our design is to notice briefly the difficulties which he had to encounter, and the opponents with whom he had to deal, to set him fairly to work, and then follow him for a time as the eastern traveller, rather than as the discoverer of ancient Nineveh; and in the later portion of our article to give a summary account of the extent and value of his discoveries, with some examination of his theories as to the ancient Assyrian history, its successive empires and dynasties; to inquire what we have actually gained for Asiatic history and for the progress of mankind; how far a way is opened to still further investigations into the language, character, habits, civilization, of the race of Assur; of the great people who preceded the rise and fall of Babylon; who were the first traditional conquerors of Western Asia; who appear at the height of power, probably under one of their later dynasties, in the biblical histories; are denounced in the fulness of their pride and glory by two at least of the ancient seers of Israel, Isaiah and Nahum; and described as utterly razed from the earth by another (Ezekiel) probably an eye-witness of their total desolation.

The first question with Mr. Layard was the place of his operations; of this he seems to have entertained little doubt. The vast plain of level débris broken by huge mounds, which spreads from the bank of the Tigris opposite Mosul, had long been called by tradition the site of Nineveh. But all excavations there had been nearly unproductive—the objects discovered, from time to time, neither valuable nor exciting to further toil. M. Botta had totally failed in his attempts in that quarter. But Mr. Layard's interest had been already powerfully directed to another quarter, to Nimroud, at about five hours' distance by the wind-ing river.

As I descended the Tigris on a raft, I again saw the ruins of Nimroud, and had a better opportunity of examining them. It was evening as we approached the spot. The spring rains had clothed the mound with the richest verdure, and the fertile meadows, which stretched around it, were covered with flowers of every hue. Amidst this luxuriant vegetation were partly concealed a few fragments of bricks, pottery, and alabaster, upon which might be traced the well-defined wedges of the cuneiform character. Did not these remains mark the nature of the ruin, it might have been confounded with a natural eminence. A long line of consecutive narrow mounds, still retaining the appearance of walls or ramparts, stretched from its base, and formed a vast quadrangle. The river flowed at some distance from them: its waters, swollen by the melting of the snows on the Armenian hills, were broken into a thousand foaming whirlpools by an artificial barrier, built across the stream. On the eastern bank the soil had been washed away by the current; but a solid mass of masonry still withstood its impetuosity. The Arab, who guided my small raft, gave himself up to religious ejaculations

as we approached this formidable cataract, over which we were carried with some violence. Once safely through the danger, my companion explained to me that this unusual change in the quiet face of the river was caused by a great dam which had been built by Nimrod, and that in the autumn, before the winter rains, the huge stones of which it was constructed, squared, and united by cramps of iron, were frequently visible above the surface of the stream. It was, in fact, one of those monuments of a great people, to be found in all the rivers of Mesopotamia, which were undertaken to ensure a constant supply of water to the innumerable canals, spreading like net-work over the surrounding country, and which, even in the days of Alexander, were looked upon as the works of an ancient nation. No wonder that the traditions of the present inhabitants of the land should assign them to one of the founders of the human race! The Arab was telling me of the connection between the dam and the city built by Athur, the lieutenant of Nimrod, the vast ruins of which were now before us—of its purpose as a causeway for the mighty hunter to cross to the opposite palace, now represented by the mound of Hammum Ali—and of the histories and fate of the kings of a primitive race, still the favorite theme of the inhabitants of the plains of Shinar, when the last glow of twilight faded away, and I fell asleep as we glided onward to Bagdad. —Pp. 7-9.

Still there seems no doubt, from Mr. Layard's subsequent and successful excavation in the mound of Kouyunjik—one of the mounds opposite to Mosul—as well as those made by him at Nimroud, and by M. Botta at Khorsabad, that each or all of these places, and others adjacent or intermediate, where the same great mounds appear, were, if not parts of one vast city, the successive localities occupied or comprehended by *Nineveh* under its successive dynasties. As (though unquestionably in a very much more extensive period of time) Babylon, Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Bagdad, succeeded each other on sites at no considerable distance, so as to be loosely described as the same city; in like manner, from that imperial caprice which seems almost to be a characteristic of great eastern sovereigns, each proud of being the founder of his own capital, the temples or palaces which it is manifest stood on every one of these sites, differing as they apparently do in age, and to a certain extent in the character of their art, may each have been the *Nineveh* of its day, the chief dwelling-place and centre of worship of the kings and of the gods of Assyria; and so no one of these being absolutely destroyed, but deserted only, and, if we may so speak, gone out of fashion, this aggregate of cities—this cluster of almost conterminous capitals—may have then gone by the proverbial name, the City of 'Three Days' Journey, just like Thebes of the Hundred Gates; or the poetic hyperbole of the Book of Jonah may be taken to the strict letter; and the prophet's first day's slow and interrupted pilgrimage through the streets may not have led him to the palace of the king. In this conjecture, which occurred to us on reading the earlier part of this work, we rejoice to find that we have anticipated the conclusion of Mr. Layard. The hypothesis in fact

seems to us the only one that can account for the vast number of magnificent edifices which unquestionably existed within a circuit too extensive for a single city, but not for a capital, which had thus grown up out of many cities.

But from the old Assyrian monarchs—the Nimrods or the Sardanapals—we must descend at once to modern pashas. Mr. Layard broke ground at Nimroud under unfavorable auspices. The ruling representative of the Sublime Porte required his most dexterous management. This worthy personage, Mohammed Pasha, was commonly known as Keritli Oglu, that is, the son of the Cretan; he seems fully to have answered to the description of that race by the old Greek poet, to whom St. Paul has given the sanction of his authority:—

Καὶ τὸς αἱ ψεύδεται, χάκα θίβει, γόστρεας ἄργοι.

This last phrase has, as will appear, its peculiar force—it expresses admirably “tooth-money:”—

The appearance of his excellency was not prepossessing, but it matched his temper and conduct. Nature had placed hypocrisy beyond his reach. He had one eye and one ear; he was short and fat, deeply marked by the small-pox, uncouth in gestures, and harsh in voice. His fame had reached the seat of his government before him. On the road he had revived many good old customs and impositions which the reforming spirit of the age had suffered to fall into decay. He particularly insisted on *dish-parassi*—or a compensation in money, levied upon all villages in which a man of such rank is entertained, for the *wear and tear of his teeth* in masticating the food he condescends to receive from the inhabitants. On entering Mosul he had induced several of the principal aghas who had fled from the town on his approach to return to their homes; and, having made a formal display of oaths and protestations, cut their throats, to show how much his word could be depended upon.—Pp. 19, 20.

Mr. Layard was too prudent to demand permission at once to commence his operations, for other reasons rather than any anticipated difficulties on the part of the governor. The Cretan, no doubt, would have hugged himself with delight at the facility with which he should possess himself of the gold and precious marketable treasures which the cunning Frank, pretending to be seized with an unaccountable passion for disinterring old stones, no doubt hoped to discover and to carry off. This view of Mr. Layard's object was shared by others—indeed, we may say by all. Awad, the Sheikh of the Jehesh, who inhabited the village near Nimroud, and was the first, and, from his familiarity with the ruins, the most useful of Mr. Layard's fellow-laborers—

could scarcely persuade himself that the researches were limited to mere stones. He carefully collected all the scattered fragments of gold-leaf he could find in the rubbish; and, calling me aside in a mysterious and confidential fashion, produced them wrapped up in a piece of dingy paper. “O, bey,” said he, “Wallah! your books are right, and the Franks know that which is hid from the true believer.

Here is the gold, sure enough, and, please God, we shall find it all in a few days. Only don't say anything about it to those Arabs, for they are asses, and cannot hold their tongues. The matter will come to the ears of the pasha.” The sheikh was much surprised, and equally disappointed, when I generously presented him with the treasures he had collected, and all such as he might hereafter discover. He left me, muttering “Yia Rubbi!” and other pious ejaculations, and lost in conjectures as to the meaning of these strange proceedings.—P. 30.

No sooner had Mr. Layard succeeded in organizing and bringing into discipline the laborers of different races and religions, all of whom willingly enlisted in his service, than other important personages of Mosul—the *cadi* and the *ulemas*, the magistrates and the clergy—who were not disposed to surrender their share in the treasure-trove—their tribute and their tithe—and were besides full of orthodox Mussulman hatred and jealousy of the Frank, began their intrigues to stop his proceedings. With his usual promptitude, Mr. Layard galloped off to Mosul. His excellency the Cretan expressed the most sovereign contempt for the *cadi*. “Does that ill-conditioned fellow think that he has Sheriff Pasha (his immediate predecessor) to deal with, that he must be planning a riot in the town? When I was at Sivas the *ulema* tried to excite the people because I encroached upon a burying-ground. But I made them eat dust, Wallah! I took every grave-stone, and built up the castle walls with them!” The pasha pretended to know nothing of the excavations; but subsequently thinking to detect the astute Frank, “he pulled out of his writing-tray a scrap of paper, as dingy as that produced by Awad, in which was also preserved an almost invisible particle of gold-leaf.” This had been sent him by an officer set to watch the proceedings at Nimroud. Mr. Layard at once suggested that an agent should be appointed to receive all the precious metals discovered, on behalf of his excellency. Affairs upon this went on smoothly for some days—chamber after chamber, sculpture after sculpture was coming to light—when orders arrived to stop further work. Again Mr. Layard rode off to Mosul. The Cretan disclaimed all his own orders—professed the utmost good will. Mr. Layard returned—and at night arrived more stringent orders to Daoud Agha, then “Commander of the Irregulars” encamped in the neighborhood:—

Surprised at this inconsistency, I returned to Mosul early next day, and again called upon the pasha. “It was with deep regret,” said he, “I learnt, after your departure yesterday, that the mound in which you are digging had been used as a burying-ground by Mussulmans, and was covered with their graves; now you are aware that by the law it is forbidden to disturb a tomb, and the *cadi* and *mufti* have already made representations to me on the subject.” “In the first place,” replied I, “being pretty well acquainted with the mound, I can state that no graves have been disturbed; in the second, after the wise and firm *politica* which your excellency exhibited at Sivas, grave-stones would pre-

sent no difficulty. Please God, the *cadi* and *mufi* have profited by the lesson which your excellency gave to the ill-mannered *ulema* of that city." "In *Sivas*," returned he, immediately understanding my meaning, "I had *Musulmans* to deal with, and there was *tanzimat*, but here we have only *Kurds* and *Arabs*, and, *Wallah!* they are beasts. No, I cannot allow you to proceed; you are my dearest and most intimate friend: if anything happens to you, what grief should I not suffer! your life is more valuable than old stones; besides, the responsibility would fall upon my head." Finding that the *pasha* had resolved to interrupt my proceedings, I pretended to acquiesce in his answer, and requested that a *cawass* of his own might be sent with me to *Nimroud*, as I wished to draw the sculptures and copy the inscriptions which had already been uncovered. To this he consented, and ordered an officer to accompany me. Before leaving *Mosul*, I learnt with regret from what quarter the opposition to my proceedings chiefly came.—Pp. 44, 45.

But how came the tombstones there?—

Daoud Agha confessed to me on our way that he had received orders to make graves on the mound, and that his troops had been employed for two nights in bringing stones from distant villages for that purpose. "We have destroyed more real tombs of the true believers," said he, "in making sham ones, than you could have defiled between the *Zab* and *Selamiyah*. We have killed our horses and ourselves in carrying those accursed stones." P. 46.

Mr. Layard afterwards, during his excavations, did come on some real graves; but as he was enabled to convince the *Arabs*, by an elaborate argument, that, since the feet were not turned to *Mecca*, they could not be the tombs of true believers, their removal, which was conducted with great care, gave no offence to the pious *Mussulmen*. By and bye—fortunately for *Mr. Layard* and for his researches, no less than for the inhabitants of *Mosul* and its neighborhood—*Keritli Oglu* was recalled, and the province was committed to the more equitable rule of *Ismail Pasha*. But even *Ismail*, though of the new school, was at first so beset by the *ulema* and the other *Frank-haters*, that he requested *Mr. Layard* to suspend his operations for a time.

The next disturbance, after he had resumed his work, was caused by a great event in the discovery. We cannot lay this before our readers in other words than those of *Mr. Layard*:—

On the morning I rode to the encampment of *Sheikh Abd-ur-rahman*, and was returning to the mound, when I saw two *Arabs* of his tribe urging their mares to the top of their speed. On approaching me they stopped. "Hasten, O *Bey*," exclaimed one of them—"hasten to the diggers, for they have found *Nimrod* himself. *Wallah*, it is wonderful, but it is true! we have seen him with our eyes. There is no god but God;" and both joining in this pious exclamation, they galloped off, without further words, in the direction of their tents.

On reaching the ruins I descended into the new trench, and found the workmen, who had already seen me as I approached, standing near a heap of

baskets and cloaks. Whilst *Awad* advanced and asked for a present to celebrate the occasion, the *Arabs* withdrew the screen they had hastily constructed, and disclosed an enormous human head sculptured in full out of the alabaster of the country. They had uncovered the upper part of a figure, the remainder of which was still buried in the earth. I saw at once that the head must belong to a winged lion or bull, similar to those of *Khorsabad* and *Persepolis*. It was in admirable preservation. The expression was calm, yet majestic, and the outline of the features showed a freedom and knowledge of art scarcely to be looked for in the works of so remote a period. The cap had three horns, and, unlike that of the human-headed bulls hitherto found in *Assyria*, was rounded and without ornament at the top.

I was not surprised that the *Arabs* had been amazed and terrified at this apparition. It required no stretch of imagination to conjure up the most strange fancies. This gigantic head, blanched with age, thus rising from the bowels of the earth, might well have belonged to one of those fearful beings which are pictured in the traditions of the country as appearing to mortals, slowly ascending from the regions below. One of the workmen, on catching the first glimpse of the monster, had thrown down his basket and run off towards *Mosul* as fast as his legs could carry him. I learnt this with regret, as I anticipated the consequences.

Whilst I was superintending the removal of the earth, which still clung to the sculpture, and giving directions for the continuation of the work, a noise of horsemen was heard, and presently *Abd-ur-rahman*, followed by half his tribe, appeared on the edge of the trench. As soon as the two *Arabs* had reached the tents, and published the wonders they had seen, every one mounted his mare and rode to the mound, to satisfy himself of the truth of these inconceivable reports. When they beheld the head they all cried together, "There is no god but God, and *Mohammed* is his Prophet!" It was some time before the *sheikh* could be prevailed upon to descend into the pit, and convince himself that the image he saw was of stone. "This is not the work of men's hands," exclaimed he, "but of those infidel-giants of whom the Prophet, peace be with him! has said that they were higher than the tallest date tree; this is one of the idols which *Noah*, peace be with him! cursed before the flood." In this opinion, the result of a careful examination, all the bystanders concurred.—Pp. 65-67.

The commotion excited by this apparition, which gave rise to still more active opposition from the religious authorities of *Mosul*, induced *Ismail Pasha* to advise *Mr. Layard* to proceed with greater caution. Other reasons concurred with this friendly admonition. *Mr. Layard*, therefore, gradually discontinued his operations, and having carefully earthed up the discoveries already made, and leaving only two men to proceed on work marked out for them, determined to await an answer to a communication which he had addressed to *Constantinople*, and in the mean time to extend his acquaintance with the dominant Arab tribes in the vicinity, and to pursue his antiquarian researches by visiting, for the second time, the celebrated ruins of *Al Hather*.

This first excursion of *Mr. Layard* led him only among the *Kurdish* tribes. This we pass over,

though it describes many amusing and characteristic points in their manners. On his return to resume his labors under more favorable auspices, he ventured to give an entertainment—a ball and supper—close by the ruins of Nimroud, to the various Arab chiefs of the district, with their followers male and female, and the Christian gentlemen and ladies of Mosul, who were all eager to see these wonderful discoveries. The ladies were glad for once to be without the walls of their houses, where, it seems, they are generally cooped up with Mohammedan jealousy. Mr. Rassam, the English consul—who was throughout the faithful and intelligent friend of Mr. Layard, his assistant in his researches, and the companion of some of his excursions—Mrs. Rassam, the French consul and his wife, were of the party. “White pavilions, borrowed from the pasha, had been pitched near the river on a broad lawn still carpeted with flowers. These were for the ladies and for the reception of the sheikhs. Black tents were provided for some of the guests, the attendants, and the kitchen.” Arabs watched the horses; an open space was left for dancing and other amusements. The great man of the feast was Abd-urrahman, sheikh of the Abu-Salman, who appeared in his most magnificent dress, and was received with befitting solemnity and noise. Then came the other sheikhs with their ladies humbly on foot; then the wife and daughter of Abd-urrahman on mares, surrounded by their slaves and handmaidens. They were entertained with a repast, ladylike and cooling, of sweetmeats, halwa, parched peas, and lettuces. The more vigorous appetites of the men, and of the less exclusive ladies, were stayed by fourteen sheep, roasted and boiled; from which, we are sorry to say, that the men first most ungallantly helped themselves, and then passed on the fragments to the females. The influence of Mr. Rassam persuaded some of the women to join in the Arab dance; but these figurantes preserved somewhat too rigid propriety; though their motions were not without grace, they persisted in wrapping themselves in their coarse cloaks. Sword-dancers followed, which wound up the performers to such a pitch of excitement that it was necessary to replace their swords by stout staves, wherewith they were allowed full Irish license of belaboring each other till they were tired. Then came the buffoons, the constant amusement of Eastern and of all half-civilized tribes. All passed off, it would seem, with exemplary decorum; the grave old Arab chief was the only one whose tender feelings were noticeably awakened. At the banquet which he gave in return the next day, the women, uncontrolled by the presence of another tribe, entered more fully into the amusement, and danced with greater animation. The sheikh challenged Mr. Layard to join in the dance, which he was too courtly to refuse; and went whirling round, in a *corps de ballet*, consisting of 500 warriors and Arab women. But that was probably a device of the sheikh to drown his rising passion. “The conqueror of

his heart was the wife of the French consul.” His admiration of her beauty exceeded all bounds;

and when he had ceased dancing, he sat gazing upon her from a corner of the tent—“Wallah,” he whispered to me, “she is the sister of the Sun! what would you have more beautiful than that? Had I a thousand purses, I would give them all for such a wife. See!—her eyes are like the eyes of my mare, her hair is as bitumen, and her complexion resembles the finest Bosrah dates. Any one would die for a *houri* like that.” The sheikh was almost justified in his admiration.—P. 121.

A still more favorable revolution in the government of Mosul had in the mean time taken place. Hafiz Pasha, who succeeded Ismail, being promoted, the province had been sold to Tahyar Pasha, “a venerable old man, bland and polished in his manners, courteous to Europeans, and well informed on subjects connected with the literature and history of the country. He was a perfect specimen of the Turkish gentleman of the old school, of whom few are now left in Turkey.” Few, indeed, there are who have not been corrupted by Frank intercourse, and have not dwindled in demeanor and manners by adopting European habits, as they have in personal appearance by the European garb. How is the whole race dwarfed down from the tall, broad, magnificent, terrible, and turbaned Turks—who affrighted Christendom with their strength and prowess, and of yore enforced our youthful awe in the cuts to Sir Paul Rycout’s edition of old Knolles—into the shabby, short, slim, shuffling, Jew-pedlar-like, and most unalarming Moslemin, who now appear in our streets, and, we regret to hear, in Constantinople, in half Frankish and half Oriental costume! Tahyar Pasha took up Mr. Layard with the utmost zeal, and only appointed an officer to protect and assist, rather than to watch, his proceedings. Of this cawass, Ibrahim by name, Mr. Layard speaks in high terms as to his intelligence and even his honesty. Besides this, our indefatigable ambassador had forwarded an imperial rescript from Constantinople, which not merely gave the full sanction of the sultan for the prosecution of the researches, but allowed Mr. Layard to secure for his country the possession of all these remarkable monuments of ancient Assyria.

His proceedings were, however, again interrupted for a time by a more unmitigable adversary than the untractable pasha or the bigot ulema—the heat. He was first driven for refuge into the underground chambers, where the inhabitants of Mosul screen themselves from the summer sun; his health then forced him to seek a cooler climate, and he set forth on his second expedition, to the mountains of Tiyyari, inhabited by the Chaldean or Nestorian Christians. This second expedition, though the interest is of a very melancholy cast, introduces us to scenes of much greater natural beauty, and to a much more remarkable people than the Kurdish clans, among which he travelled during his first ride from the Tigris.

The Chaldean Christians (the appellation Nes-

torians, though sometimes used in their intercourse with Europeans, is disclaimed both by priests and people) are the remnant of that great Oriental Church which, driven away by the persecution of the Byzantine emperors after the triumph of Cyril and the condemnation of Nestorius, took refuge under the protection of the Persian kings, and maintained its ground under the early Mohammedan sovereigns. Instead of continuing the controversial war, in which it had been worsted, it turned its face eastward, and undertook the nobler office of disseminating Christianity to the uttermost parts of the world. Mr. Layard has dwelt at somewhat disproportionate length on the early history of the Nestorians. His account is highly creditable to his research and accuracy, but is more diffuse than necessary for a book of travels, not full enough for a chapter of ecclesiastical history. The oriental bishops had, in fact, a strong predisposition to Nestorianism, in that wide-spread aversion to matter, as the evil principle, which characterized all their Christian conceptions. Hence their jealous reluctance to acknowledge that the manhood (the material manhood) could be admitted into God; their preference of the tenet that the Godhead, in its pure and unmingled essence, dwelt in the manhood; hence their rejection, that which made them more especially odious to the orthodox, of the term "Mother of God;" as implying that a mortal and material being had given birth to more than the material and mortal part of the divine Redeemer. The "mother of the Christ" was the utmost term which they would use. The great teachers of the Syrian school, Diodorus of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, were in truth the parents of Nestorianism; and when their opinions were proclaimed by a prelate of the high station of the patriarch of Constantinople, it might be expected that large numbers would enlist under his banner. The proceedings of the Council of Ephesus—in which the armed soldiery and the turbulent populace had as much to do with the decisions as the arguments of Cyril and his theologians—and the harsh and violent character of Cyril himself, were unhappily less calculated to persuade or overawe, than to harden opposition into stubborn and persevering fanaticism. While then it was expelled, or oppressed, or persecuted throughout the Byzantine empire, Nestorianism was the dominant creed beyond the pale of the Roman dominion. The patriarch of Baghdad, to which city the metropolitan throne was removed under the Mohammedan dynasty, counted as his suffragans bishops in every province of the East, with congregations more or less numerous and flourishing, from the Euphrates and Tigris to India, Tartary, and China. The history of these spiritual conquests (this is a subject of regret rather than wonder) is extremely obscure; but there seems no doubt that they had made strong and, to a certain extent, successful efforts to Christianize some of the great Mongol sovereigns in the vast steppes of upper Asia; and, had their success been more complete, might thus have somewhat miti-

gated the terrors of those terrible irruptions which century after century desolated the civilized world. It was the conquest of Tamerlane which gave the fatal blow to those outposts of Christianity in great part of the remoter East. In China we have no knowledge that any survivors of those converts who set up the well-known inscription at Siganfu, still maintain their Christian creed. The St. Thomas Christians of India have become mostly Jacobites or Monophysites.

The Chaldean Christians therefore of these regions are almost the only representatives of those once flourishing and widely disseminated churches. They are singularly interesting, not merely from their antiquity, but as faithful representatives of the creed (they admit that of Nicea in all its fullness) of the popular worship, and church government of the Eastern churches at the time of the Nestorian schism. Of the worship of images, of purgatory, of extreme Mariolatry, of the supremacy of the pope, of the absolute celibacy of the whole clergy, these more primitive Christians knew nothing. These doctrines were yet, as Mr. Newman might say, undeveloped; in fact, formed no part of the common Christianity. Even here the Chaldeans of the plains have mostly yielded to the incessant, busy, and, it must be added, unscrupulous attempts of the Roman Catholics, who set up a rival patriarch in connection with the Church of Rome. The end, and, in many cases, the means adopted to work these conversions are equally lamentable. The end appears to be the lining of the walls of the churches with wretched prints, more particularly such as represent the "Iddio Bambino," the article most obnoxious to the old Nestorian creed; and the introduction of that ceremonial which, when splendid with genuine pomp and gold, is doubtless solemn and impressive, but, when poor and shabby and tinsel, contrasts still more unfavorably with the simpler, more earnest, less ambitious worship of the old Nestorians. The means to enforce proselytism are still less creditable to the persuasive powers of the teachers. They scruple not to call in the civil power to their aid—that civil power being the Mohammedan eadi, or any other unbelieving officer whose intervention may be procured by money or intrigue. Dr. Grant, of whom we shall presently speak, mentions of his own knowledge one man whom the impartial Moslem attempted to bastinado into a Catholic. Mr. Layard, on whose judgment and impartiality we have more reliance, confirms the melancholy truth as to this system of enforcing the unity of the church.

Mr. Layard was present at the Chaldean service in the mountains—where he witnessed the administration, by two priests in white surplices, of the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, of which all partook, children as well as men and women. The impression on his mind was very favorable.

I could not but contrast these simple and primitive rites with the senseless mummerly and degrading forms adopted by the converted Chaldeans of the plains—the unadorned and imageless walls,

with the hideous pictures and monstrous deformities which disfigure the churches at Mosul.—P. 201.

The genuine type, in short, of the Chaldean Christians was now only to be seen among the mountaineers; a people of simple manners, great industry, inhabiting villages environed with fruit trees of many kinds, cultivating the mountain side in terraces; extremely devout, but without fanaticism; fondly attached to their churches and to their priests. The latter seemed quite worthy of the general respect and love—blameless and affectionate men; some of them not without learning, though, of course, as the priesthood of a rude people, with only the refinement which springs from Christian gentleness and oriental courtesy.

But, alas! this faithful few has, within these last three or four years, been reduced to a still more scanty remnant! All their villages, except one, Zaweetha, whose smiling and highly cultivated domain sadly showed the desolation of the rest, have been wasted by a ruthless chieftain, Beder Khan Beg. The inhabitants—some unresisting, some having made a brave resistance—have been massacred by thousands, their children carried off and sold as slaves. There is something connected with this melancholy history of the desolation of these valleys, which Mr. Layard, with praiseworthy tenderness, is anxious to conceal; it is, he acknowledges, a subject too painful to contemplate. Some of our readers may have read a publication on these Nestorian Chaldeans by Dr. Grant, an American missionary physician. The main object of Dr. Grant's book was to prove these Christians the lost ten tribes of Israel. This notion might be so far grounded, that many families among these races may be descended from those Jews whom we know, from the epistle of St. James, and from other good authorities, to have been settled in all these regions from the borders of Armenia as far as the Propontis; Jews of all tribes and families; some no doubt lineally sprung from those transported by the kings of Assyria to these regions. We know from the New Testament—as well as from the famous epistle of Pliny and from other quarters—how widely Christianity was disseminated from the earliest times throughout this whole range of country; and doubtless Israelites of all tribes may have been numbered among these first converts. This concession, however, we fear, would not have satisfied Dr. Grant—or his believers, if he has left any believers. Dr. Grant had fully made up his mind that they are the genuine, unmingled lost ten tribes, which, he it observed, were only supposed, by late tradition, to be kept together, shut up, and secluded in some remote quarter of the world. But enough of this. From several incidental hints we are forced into the melancholy conclusion that this American mission was in some degree connected with the fatal end of these happy communities, for whose welfare these zealous men had devoted themselves in the most self-denying spirit of love. That they were excellent men,

with the purest and best intentions, no one can doubt; self-expatriated from their homes, perhaps on the peaceful shores of the Hudson or the Delaware, and from all the freedom and comforts of their native land; of most of them the remains are at rest in the cemeteries of Mosul. Dr. Grant himself fell a victim to a fever, caught during his kind and unintermitting care of some of the victims who escaped the massacre. But it is too probable that the very Christian zeal which brought these missionaries into this remote field of labor, mingled with the jealousy of everything foreign and frank among these fierce tribes, aroused the dormant fanaticism of the Mohammedans. Mr. Layard acknowledges the want of judgment with which the missionaries chose a strong and commanding hill-top for the position of their buildings and school-house. It looked as designed for a fortress; hereafter to enslave the land; it was so well placed and of such natural strength, as to become by and by such a fortress in the hands of a predatory chieftain. Beder Khan Beg was urged, not only by his own fierce and rapacious character, but by a fanatic sheikh, to carry out the principles of the Korân, (and quotations strong and emphatic enough abound in certain chapters of that book,) by exterminating the unbelievers. He had shown his religious sincerity by massacring, in 1843, in cold blood, nearly 10,000 persons, and had carried away as slaves a great number of girls and children. One of these murder-preaching sheikhs, we should not forget to notice, was seen by Mr. Layard at Kuremi; he enjoyed a great reputation for miracles and sanctity throughout Kurdistan.

He was seated in the Iwan, or open chamber, of a very neat house; built, kept in repair, and continually whitewashed by the inhabitants of the place. A beard, white as snow, fell almost to his waist; and he wore a turban and a long gown of spotless white linen. He is almost blind, and sat rocking himself to and fro, fingering his rosary. He keeps a perpetual Ramazan, never eating between dawn and sunset. On a slab, near him, was a row of water-jugs of every form, ready for use when the sun went down.—P. 227.

His son, Sheikh Tahar, was the legitimate heir of his fame for holiness, wonder-working and ferocious fanaticism. He was accustomed when he entered Mosul to throw a veil over his face that his sight might not be polluted by Christians and other impurities in the city. This man was at the ear of Beder Khan, urging him to resume his inhuman devastations.

Mr. Layard arrived in the country after the first dreadful invasion which had wasted the villages of the Tyari; everywhere he was received with the fondest enthusiasm; the notion of his high rank only saved him, or rather, as we gather from his sly language, prevented him, to his disappointment, from sharing in the pleasing peril of being smothered in the embraces of the grateful girls. This they only ventured to do to his companion, the brother of the consul. For even here, it is

gratifying to find, that English influence had been exerted in the better cause of humanity, as it had been before in the cause of knowledge. Sir Stratford Canning had prevailed on the Porte to send a commissioner to Kurdistan to persuade Beder Khan to give up his prisoners; he had himself advanced even more potent arguments for their release, large sums of ransom money from his own pocket. Mr. Rassam, too, the English consul, had clothed and maintained at his own expense not only the Nestorian patriarch, who had taken refuge in Mosul, but many hundred Chaldeans who had escaped from the mountains. Mr. Layard therefore was welcomed with universal joy; his own kind treatment of the Chaldeans, whom he had employed in his works, had no doubt increased his popularity. The whole account of his intercourse with the priests and with the people is of singular interest; though with one fatal drawback, the presentiment which we cannot but feel while we read his pages, a presentiment sadly realized at the close of this chapter, that even then their cup of misery was not full. The cruel Mohammedan was only waiting to wreak his fanatic fury on Tkhoma, a wild but romantic district, which he had as yet spared. Such a deep-rooted jealousy and hatred of their Christian neighbors seemed to have possessed not Beder Khan alone, but some other of the Khurdish chiefs, that Mr. Layard himself was in great danger—a danger which, being as much superior to fool-hardiness as to fear, he escaped by his judgment and promptitude, and by showing himself as crafty, when necessary, as his most cunning foes. But after Mr. Layard's departure the storm burst on the happy but devoted Tkhoma. "The inhabitants made some resistance; an indiscriminate massacre took place; the women were brought before the chief and murdered in cold blood." The principal villages were destroyed; the churches pulled down. Nearly half the population perished; among them one of the Meleks, or princes, and the good priest Kasha Budea; the last except Kasha Kana, of the pious and learned Nestorian clergy. Even after the tardy justice of the Porte was put forth to crush this remorseless barbarian—justice which was content, probably mollified by some golden arguments, with a sentence of exile to Candia—the locust devoured what the canker-worm spared. Nur Ullah Bey, whom we remember Dr. Grant visiting in his castle of Jula Merk, and unhappily, as it turns out, restoring to health, fell on the few survivors who returned to their villages, and put them to the torture to discover their concealed treasures. Many died, the rest fled to Persia. "This flourishing district," sadly concludes Mr. Layard, "was thus destroyed; and it will be long ere its cottages rise from their ruins, and the fruits of patient toil again clothe the sides of the valleys."—P. 239.

The third expedition of Mr. Layard led him among a still more remarkable people, perhaps in their origin not only much older than the Nestorian form of Christianity, but even than Christianity

itself. He is admitted into the rites, almost into the inmost sanctuary of that singular race, who bear the ill-omened name of Devil-worshippers. He is the first European, we believe, who has received almost unreserved communication as to the nature of their tenets; though probably, from the ignorance of the Yezidis themselves, he has by no means solved the problem either of the date or the primal source of their curious doctrines. How extraordinary the vitality even of the wildest and strangest forms of religious belief! Here are tribes proscribed for centuries, almost perhaps for thousands of years, under the name most odious to all other religious creeds—hated and persecuted by the Christians, as, if not guilty of an older and more wicked belief, at least infected by the most detested heresy, Manicheism—trampled upon, hunted down, driven from place to place by the Mussulmen, as being of those idolaters, the *people without a Book*, towards whom the Korân itself justifies or commands implacable enmity. Against the Yezidis, even in the present day, the Moslem rulers most religiously fulfil the precepts of their Scripture—making razzias among them, massacring the males, carrying off the women, especially the female children, into their harems. That fanatic persecution, which accidental circumstances suddenly and fatally kindled against the Chaldean Christians, had been the wretched lot, time out of mind, of the Yezidis. Towards the Christians the Korân contained more merciful texts—towards the Devil-worshippers none. Yet here are they subsisting in the nineteenth century—flourishing tribes, industrious tribes, cleanly beyond most Asiatics—not found in one district alone, but scattered over a wide circuit, (some have lately taken refuge from Mohammedan persecution under the Russian government in Georgia,) celebrating publicly their religious rites—with their sacred places and sacred orders—and with the unviolated tombs of their sheikhs, their groves, and their temples. The manners of these tribes are full of the frank, courteous, hospitable freedom of Asiatics—they are resolute soldiers in self-defence—and, at least, not more given, in their best days, to marauding habits than their neighbors, and only goaded to them by the most cruel and unprovoked persecution. Their morals, as far as transpires in Mr. Layard's trustworthy account, are much above those of the tribes around them—they are grateful for kindness, and by no means, at least as far as Mr. Layard experienced, and we may add some earlier travellers, jealously uncommunicative with Franks. Their secret rites, as witnessed by Mr. Layard, are by no means those midnight orgies which have earned for them the epithet of "*Cheregh Sonderan*"—the extinguishers of lights. The imputation of revolting practices implied in this appellation is as little justified, in all probability, as the same charges advanced by the Heathens against the primitive Christians—by the orthodox Christians almost indiscriminately against the Gnostic and Manichean sects. It is the same charge which all religions have incurred, which have been obliged

to shroud their ceremonies, for fear of persecution, in night or in secrecy. Fantastic as these rites of the Devil-worshippers may be, and, instead of calm and sober worship, maddening to the utmost physical excitement, they are, as far as we can know, perfectly innocent. If dangerous, considering into what, according to some of the Fathers, the Agapæ had degenerated in the third and fourth century—considering the Jumpers, Shakers, and Revivals of modern days—considering what has been ascribed to some Mohammedan sects—at all events, if the worst has been now and then true, there may be grave doubt in many minds as to the right of throwing the first stone.

Mr. Layard's invitation to the Festival of the Yezidis was another act of gratitude arising out of English humanity. The Cretan Pasha had endeavored—not from religious zeal, but in hope of plunder and exaction—to get the head or chief priest of the tribe into his power. "Sheikh Nasr had time to escape the plot against him, and to substitute in his place the second in authority, who was carried a prisoner to the town." The heroic substitute, in his devotion to his chief, bore torture and imprisonment. He was released by the intervention of Mr. Rassam, who advanced a considerable sum on the faith of the Yezidis, and this sum was punctually repaid by them when they had reaped their harvest. The Yezidis were of course in as great delight at the recall of Keritli Oglou as the rest of the province. Mr. Rassam was unable to attend a solemn festival, when the disciples of their religion from the most distant quarters were to meet at their great holy place, the tomb of Sheikh Adi—a mysterious personage, whose history, the period of his life, his title to saintly reverence, have now become an inexplicable myth. Mr. Layard was more lucky. He was received by Hussein, the chief, a youth of remarkable beauty, rich dress, and courteous manners. After breakfast he was left to his siesta, which was broken by a shrill cry of rejoicing from the women's tents. The sheikh himself announced the joyful tidings of the birth of an heir, which had just taken place—an event which he ascribed to the good fortune attendant on the stranger's visit. The sheikh and the whole tribe entreated him to bestow a name on the infant. "Notwithstanding," says Mr. Layard, "my respect and esteem for the Yezidis, I could not but admit that there were some doubts as to the propriety of their tenets and form of worship; and I was naturally anxious to ascertain the amount of responsibility which I might incur in standing godfather to a Devil-worshipper's baby." Nothing more being meant than the choice of a name, (baptism, one of their rites, it seems, is performed by immersion, at a later period,) Mr. Layard, with his usual tact, suggested the name of the babe's grandfather, Ali Bey, who was held in high reverence in the tribe. The next day the festival began. Even Mr. Layard's practised eye may have been somewhat dazzled by the singularity and beauty of the scene, or rather the succession of scenes, which he has described with such grace

and liveliness. The contrast of this cool, shady valley, in which stood the tomb of Sheikh Adi—the religious buildings which surrounded it—its groves and its fresh and flowing waters—with the sultry cellars of Mosul, and the burning plains of Nimroud—may have heightened his powers of enjoyment! The cordiality of his reception opened his heart—but the living nature of the picture is the best guarantee for the artist's fidelity:—

I sat till nearly mid-day with the assembly, at the door of the tomb. Sheikh Nasr then rose, and I followed him into the outer court, which was filled by a busy crowd of pilgrims. In the recesses and on the ground were spread the stores of the travelling-merchants, who, on such occasions, repair to the valley. Many-colored handkerchiefs and cotton stuffs hung from the branches of the trees; dried figs from the Sinjar, raisins from Amadiyah, dates from Busrah, and walnuts from the mountains, were displayed in heaps upon the pavement. Around these tempting treasures were gathered groups of boys and young girls. Men and women were engaged on all sides in animated conversation, and the hum of human voices was heard through the valley. All respectfully saluted the sheikh, and made way for us as we approached. We issued from the precincts of the principal building, and seated ourselves on the edge of a fountain built by the road-side, and at the end of the avenue of trees leading into the tomb. The slabs surrounding the basin are to some extent looked upon as sacred; and at this time only Sheikh Nasr, Hussein Bey, and myself, were permitted to place ourselves upon them. Even on other occasions the Yezidis are unwilling to see them polluted by Mussulmans, who usually choose this spot, well adapted for repose, to spread their carpets. The water of the fountain is carefully preserved from impurities, and is drunk by those who congregate in the valley. Women were now hastening to and fro with their pitchers, and making merry as they awaited their turn to dip them into the reservoir. The principal sheikhs and cavals sat in a circle round the spring, and listened to the music of pipes and tambourines.

I never beheld a more picturesque or animated scene. Long lines of pilgrims toiled up the avenue. There was the swarthy inhabitant of the Sinjar, with his long black locks, his piercing eye and regular features—his white robes floating in the wind, and his unwieldy matchlock thrown over his shoulder. Then followed the more wealthy families of the Kochers—the wandering tribes who live in tents in the plains, and among the hills of ancient Adiabene; the men in gay jackets and variegated turbans, with fantastic arms in their girdles; the women richly clad in silk antaris; their hair, braided in many tresses, falling down their backs, and adorned with wild flowers; their foreheads almost concealed by gold and silver coins; and huge strings of glass beads, coins, and engraved stones hanging round their necks. Next would appear a poverty-stricken family from a village of the Mosul district; the women clad in white, pale and care-worn, bending under the weight of their children; the men urging on the heavily-laden donkey. Similar groups descended from the hills. Repeated discharges of fire-arms, and a well-known signal announced to those below the arrival of every new party.—Pp. 283—285.

In the midst of this occurred a characteristic and amusing incident, which for a time marred the gen-

eral mirth, and threatened to interrupt the kindly feeling between the Yezidis and the stranger. The dances had begun—

Every place, from which a sight could be obtained of the dancers, was occupied by curious spectators. Even the branches above our heads were bending under the clusters of boys who had discovered that, from them, they could get a full view of what was going on below. The manœuvres of one of these urchins gave rise to a somewhat amusing incident, which illustrates the singular superstitions of this sect. He had forced himself to the very end of a weak bough, which was immediately above me, and threatened every moment to break under the weight. As I looked up I saw the impending danger, and made an effort, by an appeal to the chief, to avert it. "If that young *sheit*—" I exclaimed, about to use an epithet, generally given in the East to such adventurous youths; I checked myself immediately; but it was already too late; half the dreaded word had escaped. The effect was instantaneous; a look of horror seized those who were near enough to overhear me; it was quickly communicated to those beyond. The pleasant smile, which usually played upon the fine features of the young bey, gave way to a serious and angry expression. I lamented that I had thus unwillingly wounded the feelings of my hosts, and was at a loss to know how I could make atonement for my indiscretion—doubting whether an apology to the evil principle or to the chief was expected. I endeavored, however, to make them understand, without venturing upon any observations which might have brought me into greater difficulties, that I regretted what had passed; but it was some time ere the group resumed their composure, and indulged in their previous merriment.—P. 286.

We must make room for the night-scene—and for Mr. Layard's certificate of its perfect innocence:

As night advanced, those who had assembled—they must now have amounted to nearly five thousand persons—lighted torches, which they carried with them as they wandered through the forest. The effect was magical; the varied groups could be faintly distinguished through the darkness; men hurrying to and fro; women, with their children, seated on the house-tops; and crowds gathering round the pedlars who exposed their wares for sale in the court-yard. Thousands of lights were reflected in the fountains and streams, glimmered amongst the foliage of the trees, and danced in the distance. As I was gazing on this extraordinary scene, the hum of human voices was suddenly hushed, and a strain, solemn and melancholy, arose from the valley. It resembled some majestic chant which years before I had listened to in the cathedral of a distant land. Music so pathetic and so sweet I had never before heard in the East. The voices of men and women were blended in harmony with the soft notes of many flutes. At measured intervals the song was broken by the loud clash of cymbals and tambourines; and those who were without the precincts of the tomb then joined in the melody.

The same slow and solemn strain, occasionally varied in the melody, lasted for nearly an hour; a part of it was called "Makam Azerat Esau," or the Song of the Angel Jesus. It was sung by the sheikhs, the cawals, and the women; and occasionally by those without. I could not catch the words; nor could I prevail upon any of those present to

repeat them to me. They were in Arabic; and, as few of the Yezidis can speak or pronounce that language, they were not intelligible even to the experienced ear of Hodja Toma, who accompanied me. The tambourines, which were struck simultaneously, only interrupted at intervals the song of the priests. As the time quickened, they broke in more frequently. The chant gradually gave way to a lively melody, which, increasing in measure, was finally lost in a confusion of sounds. The tambourines were beaten with extraordinary energy; the flutes poured forth a rapid flood of notes; the voices were raised to their highest pitch; the men outside joined in the cry; whilst the women made the rocks resound with the shrill *tahlehl*. The musicians, giving way to the excitement, threw their instruments into the air, and strained their limbs into every contortion, until they fell exhausted to the ground. I never heard a more frightful yell than that which rose in the valley. It was midnight. The time and place were well suited to the occasion; and I gazed with wonder upon the extraordinary scene around me. Thus were probably celebrated ages ago the mysterious rites of the Corybantes when they met in some consecrated grove. I did not marvel that such wild ceremonies had given rise to those stories of unhallowed rites and obscene mysteries which have rendered the name of Yezidi an abomination in the East. Notwithstanding the uncontrollable excitement which appeared to prevail amongst all present, there were no indecent gestures or unseemly ceremonies. When the musicians and singers were exhausted, the noise suddenly died away; the various groups resumed their previous cheerfulness, and again wandered through the valley or seated themselves under the trees.

So far from Sheikh Adi being the scene of the orgies attributed to the Yezidis, the whole valley is held sacred; and no acts, such as the Jewish law has declared to be impure, are permitted within the sacred precincts. No other than the high priests and the chiefs of the sect are buried near the tomb. Many pilgrims take off their shoes or approaching it, and go barefooted as long as they remain in its vicinity.—Pp. 290—293.

It is this strange and awful reverence for the evil principle which is the peculiar tenet in the creed, and has given its odious name to this ancient and singular people. With them and old Lear alone the "Prince of Darkness is a gentleman." They will not endure the profane use of any word which sounds like *Sheitan* or Satan; and they have the same aversion—some slight touch of which might perhaps not be unbecoming in the followers of a more true and holy faith—to the Arabic words for a curse and *accursed*. Satan, in their theory, which approaches that of Origen, is the chief of the angelic host, now suffering punishment for rebellion against the Divine will—but to be hereafter admitted to pardon and restored to his high estate. He is called Melek Taous, King Peacock; or Melek el Kout, the mighty angel. The peacock, according to one account, is the symbol as well as the appellative of this ineffable being—no unfitting emblem of pride. Manicheism naturally suggests itself as the source of this awe for the evil principle; but the Satan of the Yezidis seems to be the fallen archangel of the later Hebrew belief,

rather than the Zoroastrian and Persian Ahriman, the eternal rival and equal of Ormuzd; he is no impersonation of darkness as opposed to light. The Yezidis seem to have none of the speculative hostility to matter, as the eternal principle of evil, which is the groundwork of Manicheism, as it had been of all the Gnostic creeds. Nor is the evil principle the equal antagonist of the good. In all other respects their creed seems to be a wild and incoherent fusion of various tenets, either borrowed from or forced upon them by other dominant religions around them. Mr. Layard supposes the groundwork to be Sabianism, yet he does not describe them as paying especial reverence to the heavenly bodies, except perhaps to the sun, under the name of Sheikh Shems. They have a temple and oxen dedicated to that luminary; and kiss the place where his first beams fall. This, however, is pure Zoroastrianism—(we ought to note that the researches in Nineveh are in favor of the Chaldean origin of that mysterious personage and his faith.) They worship towards the rising sun, and turn the feet of their dead to that Kubleh. They have the same reverence for fire—a still more peculiar mark of the Persian creed; they hold the color blue in abomination; “are fond of white linen, and in the cleanliness of their habits and their frequent ablutions, they also resemble the Sabæans.” They reverence the Old Testament almost with Jewish zeal, (a tenet absolutely inconsistent with Manicheism;) they receive, but with less reverence, the Gospel and the Korân. Their notion of our Saviour is the Mohammedan, except that he was an angel, not a prophet; with the Korân, they take the Docetic view of his person, and deny the reality of his sufferings. Their habits have nothing of the asceticism of the Manichean sects; they do not even keep the Mohammedan Ramazan; they fast three days only at the commencement of the year, and even that is not of necessary obligation. Wednesday is their holiday, on which the more devout fast; but it is not kept with the rigor of a Sabbath. Under their Great Sheikh they have a hierarchy of four orders, and these offices are hereditary and descend to females. They are—*I.* The Pirs or saints, who lead a holy life, intercede for the people, and are supposed to cure diseases and insanity.—*II.* The Sheikhs, dressed in white, with a band of red and yellow, perform the chief functions of the ceremonial, take charge of the offerings, and vend the relics.—*III.* The Cawals are the itinerant preachers, who go round to teach the doctrines of the sect, chant the hymns, and play on the flute and tambourine.—*IV.* The Fakirs, dressed in coarse dark cloth, perform the menial offices. We regret to say that the school-master forms no part of the hierarchy. It is considered unlawful to learn to read or write. This legally established ignorance may well make us despair of ever solving the mystery as to the origin of the Yezidis. The only chance would be by obtaining the sacred volume of their traditions, their hymns, and religious ceremonial. It is in Arabic, but carefully concealed from the sight and touch

of the profane. It might indeed, after all, be hardly more satisfactory than the perplexing Codex Nasireus, the sacred book of the Sabæan Christians, or so-called Christians of St. John.

We return to Nimroud. Our limited space forces us to compress into a brief summary our account of the actual discoveries on this prolific mound. But we strongly recommend our reader to follow Mr. Layard himself in the successive steps of his operation; to catch, as almost the coldest and most unimaginative will do, the infection of his zeal, to enter into his anxieties and his hopes; to behold chamber after chamber, hall after hall, unfold themselves as it were from the bosom of the earth, and assume shape, dimensions, height; to watch the reliefs which line the walls gradually disclosing their forms; as the rubbish clears away, the siege and the battle and the hunting-piece becoming more and more distinct; the king rearing more manifestly his lofty tiara, and displaying his undoubted symbol of royalty; the attitude of the priest proclaiming his office, sometimes his form and features, his imperfect and effeminate manhood; the walls of the besieged cities rearing their battlements, the combatants grappling in mortal struggle; the horses curvetting; the long procession stretching out slab after slab, with the trophies of victory or the offerings of devotion; above all, the huge symbolic animals, the bulls or lions, sometimes slowly struggling into light in their natural forms, sometimes developing their human heads, their outspread wings; their downward parts—in their gigantic but just proportions—heaving off, as it might seem, the encumbering earth. So in Milton's noble description, if we add only the broad-horned bull to the lion and the stag—

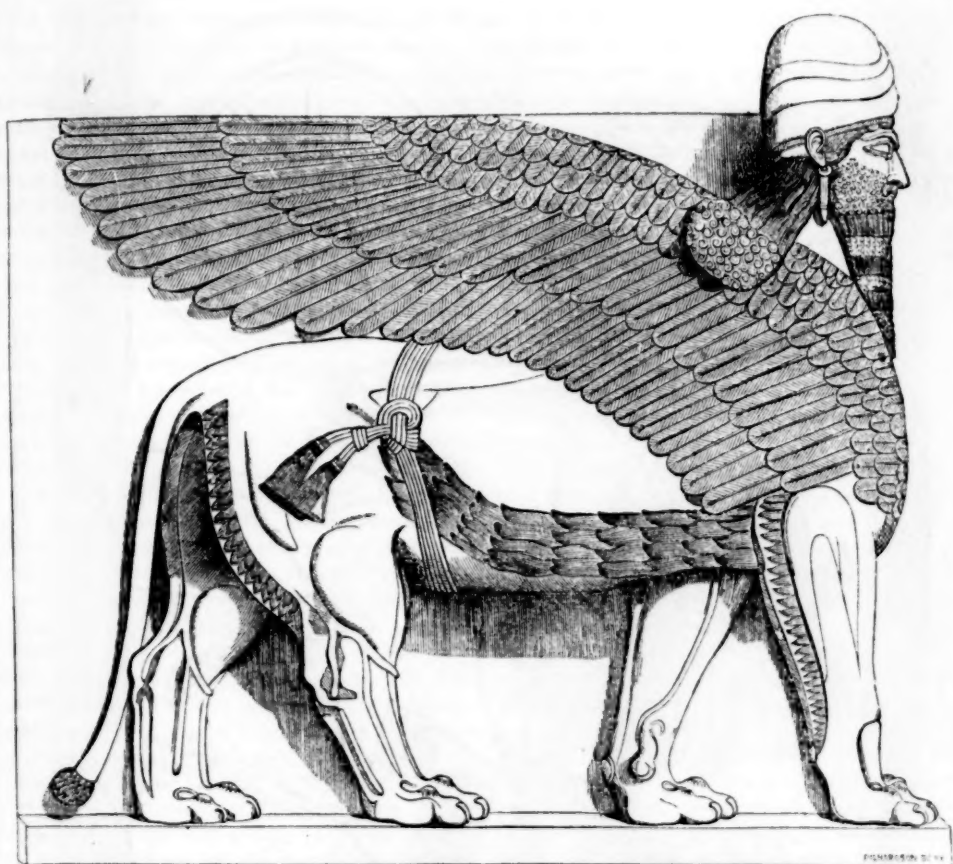
—Now half appeared

The tawny lion, pawing to get free

His hinder parts, then springs as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brinded mane; the ounce,
The leopard, and the tiger—as the mole,
Rising—the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks; the swift stag, from under ground,
Bore up his branching head.

Paradise Lost, vii. 263.

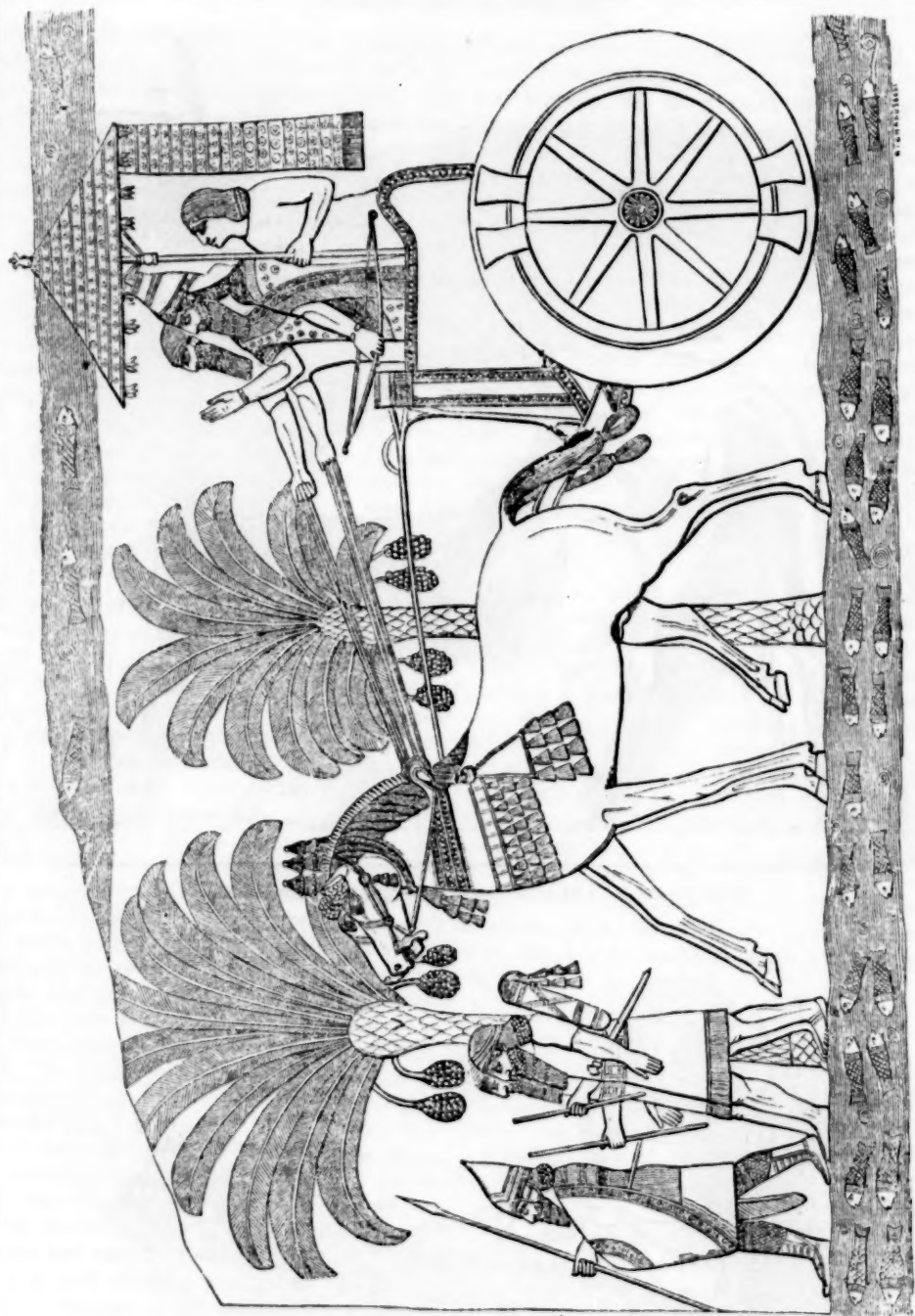
We can conceive, indeed, nothing more stirring, more absorbing, than, once certainly in the right track, to work away in these mines of ancient remains; to follow the lode, not after vulgar copper or iron, or even more precious metals, but after the images of the kings of ancient days, the records and pictures of victories—of empires almost prehistoric; to uncover the monumental inscriptions, in almost the oldest of written characters, which at least have in our own day partially surrendered their secrets to the inquisitive industry and sagacity of our Lassens and Rawlinsons; to disinter an Asiatic Pompeii, not a small, if elegant, provincial town, buried in the days of the Flavian Cæsars, but the life, the wars, the banquets, the state, the religion of the capital city of old Assyria; the great temple, in which reigned, and perhaps were worshipped, sovereigns contemporaneous with the



WINGED HUMAN HEADED LION (N. W. PALACE NIMROUD).



ASSYRIAN WARRIORS IN A CHARIOT (S. W. RUINS NIMROUD, ORIGINALLY BROUGHT FROM THE N. W. PALACE)



THE KING IN HIS CHARIOT RETURNING FROM BATTLE (KOUTUNJIE).



ORNAMENT (N. W. PALACE. NIMROUD).

elder Pharaohs, and whose names had reached the Greeks only by vague and uncertain tradition.

Mr. Layard's sagacity acquired before long a knowledge of the right mode of working these antiquarian quarries. The confident certainty with which he at last proceeded, the sort of divination which he seemed to possess, that intuitive magical rod which pointed to hidden curiosities, was no less amazing to his perplexed fellow-laborers, than his motive in consuming so much cost and time in what appeared such unprofitable labors. This simple plan of discovery at which Mr. Layard at length arrived, the knowledge of which may spare great waste of trouble and money in future researches, was grounded on the system invariably adopted, probably enforced on the founders of the larger Assyrian edifices by the circumstances and nature of their country. The low level plains on which they built their cities compelled them to give artificial elevation, both for strength and security, that they might be seen afar off and command the adjacent region. A great pavement, usually of unburnt brick, was first laid down, commensurate with the design, on a mass of brickwork thirty or forty feet high: on this pavement rose the palace or temple, with all its halls or chambers. The first object then in these researches was to pierce down to this foundation platform, (to penetrate deeper was vain and lost labor,) and, having reached its level, to work onwards in any direction along its surface till the walls crossed the way; then to follow the wall till broken by gates or openings which led into other galleries or chambers. The gates of the more important chambers were usually designated by a pair of gigantic figures—bulls, lions, or of composite forms—the colossal warders of these vast halls. The gates or doors, if there were gates or doors, being of some less durable material, had entirely perished. This knowledge, however, of the fundamental principle of Assyrian architecture was gained only by observation and experience. It was employed in Mr. Layard's later excavations in the huge mound of Kouyunjik, in the plain beyond the Tigris, opposite Mosul; and in that of Kalah Sherghat: in all of which he was eminently, if not equally, successful. It might have saved M. Botta, if it had been known from the first, much toil; and even Mr. Layard, in the researches which he made at Khorsabad, after it had been abandoned by the French. Even at Nimroud, at the first period of his excavations, when he was eager without delay to avail himself of Sir Stratford Canning's liberality, this base of operations had not been discovered; the researches were less regular and systematic, guided by the external appearance of the mound, and the first indications of the tops of the walls, which seemed to invite the pickaxe and spade. Mr. Layard's original Arab guide, an intelligent man, well acquainted with the mound, pointed out a fragment of alabaster, cropping out, in geological phrase, above the soil. On digging down it appeared part of a large slab: but the first chamber, the wall

of which was partly faced by this slab, was more perplexing than satisfactory. As yet there were neither bas-reliefs nor inscriptions; and it was evident that this chamber had been opened before—as it appeared, in the memory of living man, and from a modern inscription, by a late pasha in search of materials for tombstones. But steady perseverance—and skill, which, by such a man as Mr. Layard, was rapidly acquired—soon penetrated deeper and deeper into the unknown and inviolate; till the three great edifices of different ages, adorned by sculptures of different character—one at the north-west corner, one in the centre, one to the south-east—revealed to the light of day the Nineveh perhaps of Ninus and Semiramis, of Sardanapalus and Sennacherib, of Esarhaddon and Sardanapalus.

Mr. Layard has rendered us great assistance in his own summary of the final result of his operations. He has given, (and we are inclined to pardon the repetition, from the more perfect distinctness with which we have been enabled to accompany him,) first, a topographic account, with constant references to his plans, and then a picturesque view of the mound, into which we descend, and behold his laborers—Arabs and Chaldeans, Mohammedans and Christians—working together in the utmost harmony, in all their wild attitudes, with their fantastic gestures and dissonant cries. We range with him through the whole circuit—pass from hall to hall—contemplate the lions at the gates, the sculptures on the walls—explore the rubbish for smaller articles of curiosity.

Before Christmas, 1846, Mr. Layard had only opened eight chambers. The intelligence of funds placed at his disposal through the trustees of the British Museum enabled him to proceed on a more vigorous plan and on a more extensive scale. Before he closed his work, eight-and-twenty of these halls and galleries had come to light; and, with the assistance of his plans, we can trace the whole groundwork of the edifices. By his clever picture-writing, assisted, too, by many cuts executed with great skill by Mr. George Scharf, we are enabled to see the several parts of the mound, from a shapeless heap of rubbish covered with vegetation—a grassy hill of vast size but inexplicable shape—become gradually an assemblage of ruins, in which the walls, roofless indeed, but mostly erect, stand up before us. The chambers expand, many of them at first dazzling with rich colors, which faded unfortunately on their exposure to light; and faced with sculptured slabs. We understand the whole construction and arrangement, if not extent, of an Assyrian palace-temple.

The palace on the north-eastern corner of the mound, which Mr. Layard considers the most ancient of the Ninevite buildings, had evidently been the most magnificent edifice, displayed the more regular construction, was adorned with the finest sculptures, and covered with the more curious inscriptions. To this we shall return. But there were appearances which came to light, during the

operations about the centre of the mound, even still more surprising. There was a kind of succession in the strata of remains, which, without demanding the incalculable periods of our geologists, showed an antiquity which may well perplex the historical inquirer. Above the buried remains of the Ninevite palace, some people—a people by every indication of great antiquity—had formed their burial-place. The excavators had to dig *through* a layer of tombs, to displace the remains of the dead, which they did with great care. The tombs were not the hastily-piled sepulchres of a roving tribe—they were regularly formed of bricks carefully joined, but without mortar; some covered with slabs of alabaster; others were large earthen sarcophagi covered with slabs. Parts of a skeleton, and some of the bones, appeared entire on opening one of the tombs, but crumbled into dust on the attempt to remove them. In the first of these tombs were likewise found vases of reddish clay, and beads, and small ornaments belonging to a necklace. Besides, there was a cylinder representing a king in his chariot hunting the wild bull, a copper ornament, two silver bracelets, and a pin for the hair. It seemed that the body must have been that of a female. In other tombs were found vases of green pottery, copper mirrors, lustral spoons, and various ornaments. The whole of these ornaments were, in their character and form, *Egyptian*. *Five feet below this cemetery* appeared the remains of a building—but of a building in ruins. The walls, of unbaked bricks, could still be traced; but the slabs which had lined them, covered with bas-reliefs and inscriptions, had been detached from the walls, with the manifest intention of removing them to some other place—it should seem of employing them for some neighboring building. Mr. Layard asserts, and we think on solid grounds, that these slabs were invariably, according to the practice of Assyrian art, sculptured after they had been set up. And here, in a space of fifty feet square, cleared by the removal of about twenty tombs, above one hundred slabs were exposed to view, packed in rows, one against the other, as slabs in a stone-cutter's yard, or as leaves of a gigantic book. Every slab was sculptured; and as they were placed in a regular series, according to the subjects upon them, it was evident that they had been moved in the order in which they stood from their original positions against the walls of sun-dried bricks, and had been left as found, preparatory to their removal elsewhere. Mr. Layard had little doubt, therefore, that this central building had been destroyed to supply materials for the temple or palace at the south-west corner. The sculptures closely resembled those actually found in that edifice; and *there* also appeared slabs with the reliefs turned towards the walls. He was compelled to the strange but unavoidable conclusion that some considerable time even after this removal, in the accumulated earth and rubbish, now stirred again for the first time nineteen centuries after Christ, was the burial-place of a peo-

ple seemingly Egyptian, or in some degree Egyptianized in manners and arts—closely allied, or assimilated at least, to that now well-known race, with whom, in their own monuments, we have become familiar to the most minute household ornaments and attire. The catacomb of one age must be pierced to arrive at the palace or temple of another: one generation makes its graves, seemingly unconscious that far below are the dwellings of a generation much more ancient of course, and forgotten. Mr. Layard modestly contents himself with suggesting the questions—What race occupied the country after the destruction of the Assyrian palaces? At what period were these tombs made? What antiquity does their presence assign to the buildings beneath them? One thing seems clear—that they are neither Persian nor Greek: they belong to an anterior period, when there was a close connection between the inhabitants of this part of Assyria and Egypt. These problems must yet await their answer, and can only be answered if the inscriptions—as yet but indistinctly read, and, if interpreted at all, still more indistinctly interpreted—shall render up their secrets.

But they naturally lead to the more simple, yet not less important problem, which is started by the whole work of Mr. Layard:—What is the result of these singular discoveries? what light do they throw on the history of mankind—on the origin, early development, and progress of human civilization? How far has the great empire of Assyria, from a vast and vague Oriental tradition, an imposing and mysterious myth, become a reality? How far are we able to fill up its dim and interrupted annals? The only trustworthy history of Assyria, up to this time, has been that of its close: from this—of which a proximate date can be assigned—we must ascend (in such history the upward is the only intelligible course) into its more cloudy antiquity. We know, as near as possible, the period at which Nineveh and her sovereigns disappeared from the face of the earth. Mr. Layard, we think, takes unnecessary pains to prove this absolute and total destruction of Nineveh and the Assyrian cities. It is quite impossible that within the range of history, after the fall of Babylon and the rise of the great Persian monarchy, any large capital can have arisen unnoticed, or any powerful sovereigns ruled on the shores of the Tigris. There can be no reasonable doubt that all these ruins—those of Khorsabad, Kon-yunjik, Kalah Shergat, as well as Nimroud, belong to the Assyrian Nineveh, of which the fall is described as an historic fact, which, if he had not witnessed, had made an awful impression on the mind of man in his day, by the prophet Ezekiel—Ezekiel who lived on the banks of the Chebar, one of the affluents of the Tigris. The prophet cites it as a terrible and notorious admonitory example to the haughty kings of Egypt (ch. xxxi.) The date of the fall of Nineveh is brought even to a closer point. In Isaiah it is the Assyrian who is subduing Western Asia. Jeremiah knows



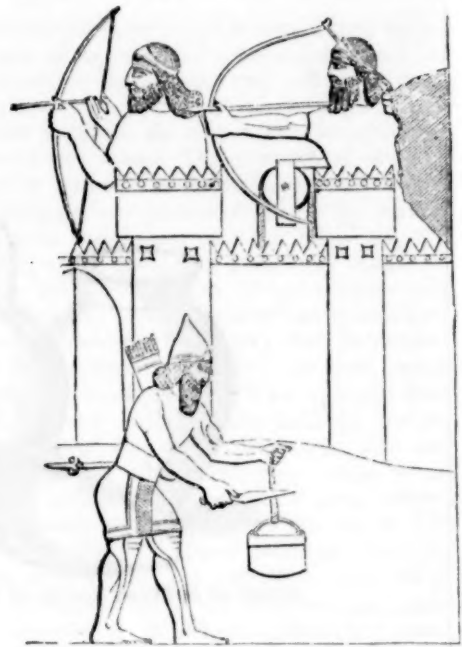
FORMS OF POTTERY FOUND IN THE TOMBS ABOVE THE RUINS AT NIMROUD.



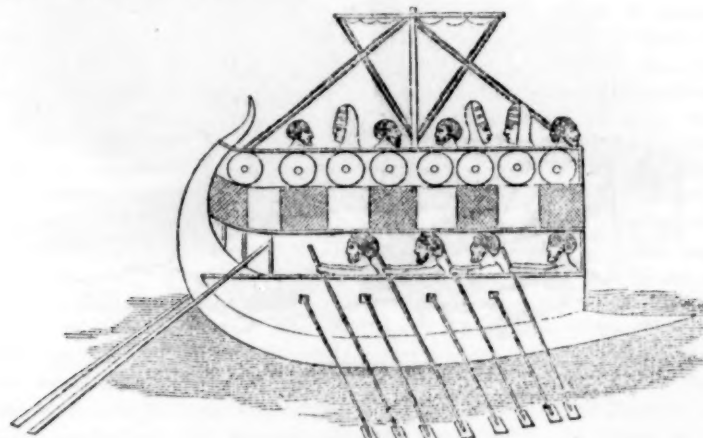
THE OBELISK.



HERA, OR THE ASSYRIAN VENUS.
(FROM A ROCK-TABLET NEAR THE ANCIENT PTERIUM.)



PART OF A BAS-RELIEF.
SHOWING A PULLEY, AND A WARRIOR CUTTING A BUCKET
FROM THE ROPE.



SHIP (KOUYUNLIK.)

no great eastern power but the Chaldean king of Babylon. The date which can be made out from the account in Herodotus of the conquest of Ninus or Nineveh, by Cyaxares the Mede, singularly coincides with this period; and, in a word, chronologists cannot be far wrong in fixing the year 606 B. C. for the final extinction of the empire of Assyria. The latest dynasty of the Assyrians is familiar to us in the biblical histories. The names of Tiglath Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and Eserhaddon are known as having enveloped the kingdom of Israel in their western conquests, and as having menaced Jerusalem. These, Mr. Layard seems to conclude, are the kings who built Kouyunjik, Khorsabad, and the later Nimroud palaces—whose victories are commemorated in the later sculptures;—and at all events those sculptures are singularly illustrative of the campaigns thus incidentally or more fully described in the Hebrew writings. That some of those western conquests, either predicted or historically related by the chroniclers or prophets, are recorded on these very slabs, is by no means improbable. There has been an attempt, indeed, to identify one conquered people with the Jews; for this we think no sufficient proof or argument is offered—but the prisoners—men, women, and children—who are led away into bondage from the captive cities *may* doubtless represent, among other, some of those who were carried off from their native homes in Palestine to Halah, and Hamath, and Gozar. The identical Rab-Saris, the chief eunuch—perhaps the Rab-Shakeh, the chief cup-bearer—who were sent to denounce war against Jerusalem, *may possibly* be seen in some of the long processions. The Rab-Saris is perpetually found as the prime-minister, the vizier, or representative of the monarch. But the most remarkable identification of the western conquests of Assyria with those of prophetic history is on certain slabs which commemorate the siege and subjugation of maritime fortresses. In the earlier sculptures boats appear, such as are now used on the Tigris and Euphrates: there is one ferrying over a royal chariot, with swimmers around it, supported on bladders, as at the present day. On the later reliefs of Kouyunjik are vessels apparently not belonging to the Assyrians, (who never, probably, became a maritime people,) but to the cities they are besieging. They are shown to be sea-vessels by the somewhat clumsy but significant device of sea-fish swimming about them; but are the same in shape and construction—and that a very peculiar construction—with vessels found on coins of the early Persian monarchy, and those of Sidon of a much later period. The cities besieged, it is no rash conclusion, may therefore be Tyre or Sidon, or some of the other flourishing mercantile towns on that coast.

But what learn we of that other dynasty which—high above that which began with Pul and ended in the fall of Nineveh (see vol. ii., pp. 381, &c.)—commencing with Ninus and Semiramis, is said to have endured for 1360 years, and closed

with Sardanapalus? What learn we of those more primeval Assyrian monarchs, the builders of Nineveh and of the older Babylon? Concerning this royal race, all which has come down to us is through the Greeks, and those mostly late compilers, though they occasionally cite earlier vouchers. The whole of this is so vague, wild, and unreal, as to make us suspect more than the usual proverbial mendacity of Grecian history. These elder Assyrian sovereigns, their achievements, their edifices, loom dimly through the haze of impenetrable antiquity, and might seem to owe their grandeur in a great degree to their remoteness.

Mr. Layard devotes many pages to the fragments or traditions of history concerning this earlier empire. He has collected these with much industry from all quarters, but has appealed to them with too little discrimination. Considering the age, the active and adventurous life of Mr. Layard, his scholarship is of so much higher order than we had a right to expect; his judgment is so rarely led astray by the temptations of his exciting theme, that we would speak with most respectful tenderness of his adherence to the old usage (an usage, we regret to say, still countenanced by some of our most distinguished scholars and chronologists) of heaping together, with the more valuable authorities, passages from the most obscure and worthless writers concerning subjects on which they could not but be profoundly ignorant, or from writers of better name, where their authority can have no weight. In his Introduction, it is singular that he promises to be as severe and judicious as we would require; his conclusions are simple, sound, and just, while the unfeigned modesty of his language, the excuses which he urges of bad health as well as overwhelming occupation, cannot but strongly prepossess us in his favor. But in the body of his work he has neglected somewhat too much that rigid historical criticism, without which it is impossible to distinguish fact from fable, mythic legend from historic truth. Surely, for instance, we are now far beyond the authority of Pliny and the poet Lucan, as to the inventors of written characters. We know that the Greeks generally supposed their own to be derived from the Phœnician; and it was natural that they should esteem their teachers the primary discoverers of letters; but of what weight is that Greek opinion as to the question itself?

As, however, this early Assyrian history must be forced, by these discoveries, on the attention even of the general reader, it may be worth the pains to examine its real amount and value. When Herodotus wrote, the great empire of Babylon had entirely swallowed up, and, as it seems, totally obscured the more ancient kingdom of Assyria. Semiramis is introduced only as having ruled in Babylon; Nineveh is hardly more than once or twice distinctly, and that incidentally, mentioned—once as having been included in the conquests of the Babylonian queen Nitocris—and again, in the Median history, as having fallen under the victorious arms of Cyaxares. In another passage

Herodotus speaks, as it were accidentally, of the Assyrians, as having ruled Upper Asia for 520 years. It seems absolutely impossible to limit the whole empire of Assyria to this narrow period. This sentence, therefore, probably refers to the rule of some particular Assyrian dynasty, or some period when their empire was at its height as to power and extent (Herod. i. 95.)*

Almost the whole of the Ninevite history, therefore, is found in the compilation of Diodorus Siculus, and is avowedly transcribed from that of Ctesias—with some few additions from other less trustworthy authorities. What, then, is this history? A full and particular account only of the first and most remote ancestors of this race, of Ninus and Semiramis; and of the last of the dynasty, Sardanapalus. There is nothing, except perhaps the enormous numbers of their forces, absolutely incredible in the campaigns and conquests of Ninus; nothing more surprising than in those attributed to Sesostris, or even to modern conquerors, Zengis or Tamerlane. In the history of Semiramis, Diodorus endeavors to discriminate the mythic from the historical; the supernatural and religious from the real. Eastern annals, however, or even western, may furnish examples of women of inferior birth becoming by their beauty and fascinations, first the wives of powerful satraps or viziers, afterwards of doting monarchs; now assuming the reins of empire in their husbands' name, then in their own; carrying on long and perpetual wars; conducting remote campaigns; and founding magnificent cities. We see no reason to doubt, *à priori*, though the vastness of her works may be heightened and in great degree fabulous, that Semiramis may have built the primeval Babylon, waged war in India, or even been the first to employ Rab-Sares in her great offices of state. She may even have furnished a precedent for that lawless and prodigal plan of indulging her own

passions without endangering her power, which acquired for a late imperial female the name of the Northern Semiramis. Let us grant, then, that there may be some historic ground for the actual being of Ninus and Semiramis. We say not whether Diodorus or Ctesias had any foundation for the definite period of 1360 years (so we read in our edition, Wesseling's, of Diodorus, not 1306, as stated by some chronologists) which they assign to this dynasty. But what follows in Diodorus—no doubt in Ctesias—these accounts of the campaigns, conquests, buildings of Ninus and Semiramis? How are these annals, so splendidly begun, and with so many historic particulars, continued? By a total blank of thirty generations! Of the 1360 years assigned to the dynasty, more than a thousand were, as we are informed, altogether barren of events worthy of record. From Ninus, the son of Semiramis, the first of that character, a race of *Rois Fainéants* succeeded—without doing any one great achievement or suffering any one memorable revolution. The plain and glaring truth is, that later ages knew nothing whatever about the period; as no one knew what was done, the complacent later historians determined that nothing was done. We should have made an exception; there is one single so-called historic fact, one event recorded, which, as coming from a Greek historian, is no less strange than suspicious—it is the mission by the Assyrian King Teutames, of Memnon, at the head of a powerful force, 20,000 foot and 200 chariots, to his vassal, King Priam, during the siege of Troy. And Ctesias would persuade us that he read this in the *royal archives*! What archives? Ctesias of Cnidos was, as is well known, a contemporary of Xenophon, and employed as a physician at the court of Persia. It is marvellous surely how this fragment, and this fragment alone, not only of ante-Persian, but of ante-Babylonian history, should find its way among the records of the house of Darius. We dwell on this the more because it is one of those cases in which Mr. Layard has betrayed some want of discrimination. We will not quite say that he relates it as if persuaded of its credibility, though in a note he somewhat gravely rebukes the blunder of Virgil in making Memnon a black. With Mr. Grote we must take the freedom of abandoning the whole story to "the Legend of Troy," and we know not why the cyclic *Æthiopis*, from which no doubt Virgil borrowed his black Memnon, is not quite as good history as this strange passage of the Cnidian physician. It may be uncourteous, but it is tempting to speculate, whether Ctesias invented the fable, either as a court flatterer, to prove the ancient title of the great Eastern sovereigns to the allegiance of the kings of Asia Minor; or as a patriotic Greek, to boast of the total defeat of the first great Eastern host which encountered the Greeks in those regions.

From Ninus and Semiramis, with this one resting place, Diodorus leaps to Sardanapalus. His account of that luxurious sultan is too well known; but there is certainly this very singular circum-

* We agree with those modern critics who do not believe that Herodotus ever wrote an Assyrian history. This work was unknown to any writer of antiquity. Mr. Layard is wrong when he says, in his Introduction, that "Aristotle, de Anim. viii. 18, mentions having seen it." Aristotle merely mentions a fact in natural history, of which a certain author was ignorant—for that author in his account of the taking of Nineveh describes an eagle drinking. But the name of that author in the best MSS. is *Ἡσιόδοτος*—which reading is retained by Bekker; and, however it may seem more probable that Herodotus should have described the taking of Nineveh than Hesiod, yet, even if so, there is nothing to show that Aristotle did not cite from memory, or copy from some other less accurate writer. The two passages in Herodotus, where he speaks of his *Ἀσσυρίων λόγους*, and his *Ἑταίων λόγους* (l. c. 106 and 184,) by no means show that he ever fulfilled his intention, if he had such intention, of writing a separate Assyrian history. There is a slight inaccuracy in the article Herodotus, in the excellent Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography, edited by Dr. W. Smith. It is the long line of Babylonian kings, not the taking of Nineveh, which Herodotus promises (c. 184) to relate in *other discourses or books*. It is in c. 106 that he says, "How they (the Medes) took Nineveh, I will describe in other books." (*ἄν ἑτέροις λόγοις*.) It is by no means impossible that Herodotus may have designed either to be more full on the history of Assyria in his great work, or may have projected another, and abandoned either design from want of materials. Such a book, by such an author, if written, could hardly have perished entirely, and escaped all later compilers.

stance, that the act of Sardanapalus, in making his palace his own gorgeous funeral pyre, and burying himself upon it, is also attributed to the king who was overthrown by Cyaxares. More than one of the great palaces, that of Khorsabad, and one at Nimroud, were manifestly destroyed by fire; but of the earliest, the north-western at Nimroud, there is no appearance that it was destroyed by that element, the agency of which it would be impossible not to discover even in these long-interred ruins.

This chasm of above 1000 years, which Diodorus has left in the Assyrian history, is filled up with a barren list of names by the Christian chronologists, by Eusebius and Syncellus, who frequently differ in the number and the names of the kings. We know not whether they took, either directly or through later writers, from Ctesias, the names which Diodorus suppressed as unworthy of record, or drew them from some other, perhaps more questionable, source. The biblical records, which we must remember do not assert themselves to be the history of the world, but of one peculiar race, afford no information; yet neither is their silence to be considered as any valid objection. A mighty empire may have existed on the Tigris, as it certainly existed in Egypt, after Abraham, and long before Abraham, but would by no means necessarily find its place in the annals of the race of Abraham.

What, then, if at this period of the world we should recover history which has perished from the memory of man since the fall of Nineveh, history of which the Greeks, perhaps the Persians, were altogether ignorant? It is difficult to doubt that much which is historical is wrapped up in the long inscriptions that accompany every siege or battle-piece; assign his proper name to every king; and contain within their hidden character a succession of kings, with their most memorable achievements. There then are the records, the archives of Nineveh; and many of these of great length are now secured from further destruction. They have been copied with the utmost care; and transferred from the perishable stone or alabaster to printed pages, which the careful philologist may study at his leisure in his own chamber, and with all the aids of learning. But they are not only in a character, if known at all, (for Major Rawlinson's is the Persian, not Assyrian alphabet,) as yet imperfectly known:—a character, which, no doubt, varied so considerably with the different races which employed it, that to read it to good purpose on the stones of Nimroud, may almost require a new discovery as felicitous as that of Grotefend, Lassen, and Rawlinson. That the Assyrians, as the oldest people who had attained to any degree of civilization, should have been the inventors of this cuneiform, arrow-headed or wedged-shaped writing, is in itself highly probable; and their form of letters would be, as accordingly Mr. Layard actually asserts that it is, the most simple and least complicated. But beyond this there is the further difficulty; we have not merely to decipher the character, but to discover and interpret the lan-

guage. This is the great problem which must test the sagacity of foreign and English scholars, the Lassens and Bournoufs of the continent, our own Rawlinsons, Birchens, and Layards. There is every probability that it will turn out, if ever clearly deciphered, a Semitic language; but even on this point there is as yet no absolute certainty.

On the progress made in the deciphering this arrow-headed writing, though not unwatchful of its extent, at present we must decline to enter, and for obvious reasons; want of space, and consequent inability to make the subject intelligible to the ordinary reader. We are anxiously waiting too the communication of Major Rawlinson's latest and most mature views, his ultimate judgment on the Assyrian character and language. This we know at present only from rumor and from casual hints in Mr. Layard's volumes. But having acknowledged our full trust, as far as its general truth, in Major Rawlinson's interpretation of the great tri-charactered or trilingual inscription of Bisutun, and looking with anxious expectation for the details of his announced discovery of the annals of the Ninevite kings, we can only express our most friendly solicitude that the students in this difficult inquiry may not imperil their science by crude or hasty conclusions. Mr. Layard mentions one very happy mutual testimony furnished by the interpreters of Egyptian and of cuneiform writing. The same name, expressed in the parallel columns of a bilingual inscription, in hieroglyphics and arrow-headed characters, was read off, (without any communication between the parties,) the arrow-headed from Major Rawlinson's alphabet, the hieroglyphic by Sir Gardner Wilkinson, as "Artaxerxes." But it is discouraging, as to the Assyrian cuneiform, to find such sentences as these in Mr. Layard's book: "Letters differing widely in their forms, and evidently the most opposite in their phonetic powers, are interchangeable. The shortest name may be written in a variety of ways:—*every character in it may be changed.*"—(Vol. ii., p. 190.) We do not mean to assert that the principles of these variations may not hereafter be discovered, and their laws laid down by long and patient philological investigation, and by analogy with other languages; but we must think that caution becomes more and more imperative; that every step must be secured before another can be made in advance. We must, moreover, plead guilty to some misgivings, when we find a particular character with the force of the letter N assigned to it by Mr. Layard; while another zealous student—whose able, though, we must be permitted to say, somewhat confused, papers demand a closer examination than we have been able to bestow upon them, but who is acknowledged at all hands to have developed the system of numerals with success—while Dr. Hincks is convinced it is either the name, or an abbreviation of the name, of Athur, the kingdom of Assyria. All to which Mr. Layard has aspired in the present work, is the detection of certain names of kings, following each other in regu-

lar order on different tablets, and so growing into a genealogy of several successive monarchs, designated by certain characters, which signify "the son of," and combining other proofs that they belong to a continuous series. But it is hardly fair upon the ordinary reader for Mr. Layard to print these lines of inscription from different slabs, which are to be considered equivalent to, and explanatory of, each other, in cuneiform characters alone. He ought to have told us in plain English or Roman letters, the names which he thus read. Even the philologist, who has paid some attention to the system, may be almost equally at a loss; as Major Rawlinson's alphabet is not applicable to the Assyrian cuneiform, and no other alphabet has as yet, we believe, been found to test the readings on these monuments.

But even if these sullen and obstinate inscriptions refuse to yield up their secret treasures of knowledge; if we are baffled by the recondite language, owning no manifest analogy with any of the known languages, ancient or modern, of western Asia; if we are doomed to gaze upon them in unintelligent wonder, as men did so many ages, before the days of Young and Champollion, on the sealed hieroglyphics of Egypt; if we get no further than to make out barren lists of names (curious, indeed, if confirmed by those in the chronologists, yet of very limited interest)—still we cannot but think this sudden reintegration, as it were, of the great half-fabulous empire of Assyria, one of the most singular adventures, so to speak, of antiquarian research. Though we may not be able, as the Chevalier Bunsen aspires to do for Egypt, to assign the place of Ninevite Assyria in the history of mankind and of civilization, yet it is a surprising event to receive, on a sudden, such unanswerable evidence of her power, wealth, greatness, luxury, and skill in manufactures and arts; of the extent of her conquests, and of course in a more imperfect and indistinct manner, the character of her social life and of her religion.

Our conclusions do not differ from those of Mr. Layard, as to the vast antiquity of the Assyrian empire. The total and acknowledged ignorance of Ctesias as to the events of any reign anterior to Sardanapalus, of course greatly shakes our faith in his authentic knowledge as to the length of those reigns, and altogether as to the period of 1360 years from Ninus to Sardanapalus. We are so much of the new school as to venture some doubts, notwithstanding our own admissions, whether Ninus himself be a myth or a real personage, the impersonated tribe, or city, or empire, like Dorus and Ion, and Hellen, and the Egyptian Menes, or the actual father of a dynasty and the builder of the capital; and to this conclusion Mr. Layard himself seems to have come in his introduction—which, like most introductions, has clearly been the last part written. Semiramis, as we have said, has more of an historical character, though surrounded, no doubt magnified, by the haze of legend. But Mr. Layard's argument we think decisive as to the general question.

There is no reason why we should not assign to Assyria the same remote antiquity we claim for Egypt. The monuments of Egypt prove that she did not stand alone in civilization and power. At the earliest period we find her contending with enemies already nearly, if not fully, as powerful as herself; and amongst the spoil of Asia, and the articles of tribute brought by subdued nations from the north-east, are vases as elegant in shape, stuffs as rich in texture, and chariots as well adapted to war as her own. It is not improbable that she herself was indebted to the nations of western Asia for the introduction of arts in which they excelled, and that many things in common use were brought from the banks of the Tigris. In fact, to reject the notion of the existence of an independent kingdom in Assyria, at the very earliest period, would be almost to question whether the country were inhabited; which would be directly in opposition to the united testimony of Scripture and tradition. A doubt may be entertained as to the dynasties and the extent of the empire, but not as to its existence; that it was not peopled by mere wandering tribes appears to be proved by the frequent mention of expeditions against Naharaina, (Mesopotamia,) on the earliest monuments of Egypt and the nature of the spoil brought from the country.—Pp. 225, 226.

It is this reciprocal light thrown upon each other by the Egyptian and Assyrian monuments which, in a broad and general way, seems the unanswerable guarantee for their historic authority. Taking at its lowest the certainty of the system of hieroglyphic interpretation, besides this, Egypt displays to us the living and intelligible sculptures in all her older buildings (which are yet much younger than the pyramids.) These it is impossible to suppose the creations of fantastic artists, the records of imaginary combats, sieges, and conquests. The peculiarities of dress, form, and feature, so carefully and minutely preserved, must mean to indicate real and well-known tribes brought into subjection, and yielding spoil or tribute to their Pharaonic masters; the scribes who, with a singular correspondence, both in the Egyptian and Assyrian monuments, are taking note of the number of heads presented to the conquering monarchs, must be commemorating actual victims, not amusing their kings with fictitious scenes of cold-blooded murder. The spoils are in many cases the undoubted products, the animals, the beasts and birds of foreign lands, no capricious inventions or symbolic creatures, but of a well-known shape and kind. There can be no doubt that the Egyptian annals, up to a period not yet ascertained, are thus graphically represented on the walls of the temples and cemeteries. If there flourished a great line or lines of sovereigns, long before Abraham, in the valley of the Nile, a civilized people, a peculiar religion, a potent hierarchy—why not a dynasty or dynasties, a people as far advanced in civilization on the shores of the Tigris? Nowhere should we expect to find the first mighty empires, the first great cities, so probably as in the rich agricultural districts on the shores of the Nile, the Euphrates, or Tigris. If such empires coëxisted, they would naturally be

connected by commerce, or opposed in war. Throughout almost the whole of real ancient history, biblical as well as profane, some great Asiatic kingdom and some great Egyptian kingdom are striving for the mastery. Palestine and Syria are perpetually the Flanders of the war between the two continents. For a long period after the final settlement of the Israelites in Canaan, their annals are vague and fragmentary; not even a complete and continuous history of the Jews themselves, still less of the conterminous nations. During the great period of the Hebrew monarchy, that of David and Solomon, the kings of Judah may be imagined as holding the balance, perhaps keeping the peace, between the rival empires. But during all the later and more disastrous period, the Jewish kings are alternately compelled into alliances, or suffer invasion from these hostile powers. On one side Nineveh and Babylon, on the other No-amoun (Thebes) or Memphis, claim their allegiance or invade their territory. The conquest of Egypt by the Persians closed for a time the rivalry, which broke out again between the successors of Alexander; when the Antiochi and Ptolemies renewed the strife, till both were crushed by Rome. But for how many ages before this contest for supremacy had been going on, who shall presume to declare? It will surely be time to limit these ante-Mosaic or ante-Abrahamic centuries by biblical chronology, when the true and authoritative chronology of the Bible shall have been settled between the conflicting statements of the Hebrew text, as it stands at present, the Samaritan, the Septuagint, and Josephus (which last, from one passage in St. Paul, appears to have been the received system of our Saviour's time;) when there shall be a full agreement among the one hundred and twenty writers, great part of them Christian scholars and divines, some of the highest name for piety and biblical learning, whom Dr. Hales quotes as assigning their discordant dates, differing by some thousands of years, to the creation and the deluge—yet almost all these professing to build their system on the Scriptures.

That during these evolving centuries the empire of Assyria should suffer great change; that dynasty should dispossess dynasty; that the throne should be occupied by sovereigns of different descent, even of different race; that the founder or the more powerful emperor of a new dynasty should enlarge, extend, create a new suburban capital—or build a new palace, a new temple, above the ruins of the old; that like monarchs, ancient and modern, they should take a pride in surveying the works of their own hands, the monuments of their own power, wealth, and luxury—(Is not this the great Nineveh or Babylon which I have built?)—all this is in the ordinary course of human affairs, more particularly in the old Eastern world. The change described by Mr. Layard as evinced by the sculptures in the buildings which belong to the more ancient, and those ascribed to the later dynasty—a change in dress, habits, arms, perhaps in

religious usage—above all in the style of art which, singularly enough, degenerates in the later period:—this is rather to be expected, than a cause of wonder. The marvel is that the curious antiquarianism of man, thousands of years after, should be sagacious enough to detect the signs of such revolutions. At one period, far from the earliest, Assyrian art and Assyrian life appear to Egyptianize, as if the city had been subdued and occupied during some Egyptian conquest; and yet keen and practised observers, like Mr. Birch, profess to discover distinctions between genuine and native Egyptian work and that wrought in a foreign land under Egyptian influence. Such is the case with some of the curious, and, we must add, exquisitely-finished ivories,* which are obviously Egyptian in subject and in form, but yet with some remarkable peculiarities of their own. Into these details it is impossible for us to enter, but we will briefly state the general conjectural conclusions at which Mr. Layard and Mr. Birch appear to have arrived. The great period of Egyptian influence, whether by connection, commerce, or domination, was during the dynasties from the eighteenth to the twenty-second of the Egyptian kings; a period which we may loosely indicate by saying that it would include the reign of King Solomon in Judea. To this period *may* possibly belong those perplexing tombs in which the Egyptian ornaments are chiefly found, and which cover the remains of the North-Western, Central, and South-Eastern palaces of Nimroud. How long before this period reigned the builders and rulers of these long-buried palaces, seems now the great question. The far older and more perfect sculptures of these palaces clearly prove a dynasty of wide-ruling, wide-conquering sovereigns. But, while the student of Egyptian antiquities has been able to make out the names of the many nations subdued by the Egyptian arms, during the reigns of their Rhamseses—and there is a striking variety of complexion, feature, dress, arms, as well as a peculiarity in the spoils from their lands—according to Mr. Layard, in most of these Ninevite reliefs there are only two races or peoples which can be clearly discriminated; and neither of these can be assigned by any marked characteristics of form, countenance, arms, or dress, to any particular age or country. Various countries are, however, designated; cities situated by the shores of two rivers—and cities on one stream; mountain cities girt with forests—and cities on plains, amid groves of palm-trees. But incomparably the most curious of those treasures which Mr. Layard has deposited in the British

*As to these ivories, there is a very interesting story. When they reached this country to every appearance they seemed about to crumble into dust. The keen eye of modern science instantly detected the cause of the decay. "Boil them in a preparation of gelatine;" it is that constituent part of the ivory which has perished. It was done; and the ivories are as hard and firm as when first carved; they may last another thousand years or two. The merit of this suggestion is contested, we hear, by the Dean of Westminster and Professor Owen; it may very probably have occurred to both resourceful minds.

Museum is the obelisk of black marble, without doubt belonging to the earlier Assyrian monarchy, which clearly commemorates transactions in the further East, apparently in India. Among other trophies this shows the Bactrian camel with two humps, the elephant, the rhinoceros, and many apes or monkeys. The mind is led back as by force to the Indian campaigns at least of Semiramis. Even if these are only the offerings of respect from foreign kingdoms, not the spoil or tribute of conquered and subject realms, they imply a wide extent of fame and power; and this obelisk Mr. Layard is disposed to consider as among the very oldest, if not the oldest, of the Assyrian remains.

Until the complete publication of Mr. Layard's great work on the Monuments of Nineveh, we shall not be in full possession of all the curious information conveyed by the disinterred sculptures as to the policy, the religion, the buildings, arms, arts, dresses, furniture, vessels of the ancient Assyrians. But it is surprising how much may be collected by patient and sagacious examination on all these points; and how clearly the whole is placed before us in the lively concluding chapters of Mr. Layard's present book, illustrated as it is with a profusion of clever wood-cuts. Oriental monuments disclose but little of the manners of the people, (we have no painted tombs with all the pursuits of common life, like those of Egypt;) they are monarchical or rather autocratic; we see the king, and a royal personage he is, not more distinguished by the signs and attributes of royalty, the splendor of dress and of arms, than by his superior stature and majesty. Though sometimes offering to the gods, he is to his subject-eunuchs and cupbearers, to his soldiers and to his captives, a representative of the Godhead upon earth.

The residence of the king, writes Mr. Layard, in his chapter on the religion of Assyria, was probably at the same time the temple; and that he himself was either supposed to be invested with divine attributes, or was looked upon as a type of the Supreme Deity, is shown by the sculptures. The winged figures, even that with the head of the eagle, minister to him. All his acts, whether in war or peace, appear to have been connected with the national religion, and were believed to be under the special protection and superintendence of the deity. When he is represented in battle, the winged figure in the circle hovers above his head, bends the bow against his enemies, or assumes his attitude of triumph. His contests with the lion and other formidable animals not only show his prowess and skill, but typify at the same time his superior strength and wisdom. Whether he has overcome his enemies or the wild beasts, he pours out a libation from the sacred cup, attended by his courtiers, and by the winged figures. The embroideries upon his robes, and upon those of his attendants, have all mythic meanings. Even his weapons, bracelets, and armlets are adorned with the forms of sacred animals, the lion, bull, or duck. In architectural decorations, the same religious influence is evident. The fir, or pine cone, and the honeysuckle, are constantly repeated. They form friezes, the capitals of columns, and the fringes of hangings. Chairs, tables, and couches, are adorned with the heads and

feet of the bull, the lion, and the ram, all sacred animals.—Pp. 473-4.

This chapter on the religion of Assyria, though of necessity peculiarly vague and conjectural, leads on the whole, to the conclusion that between the earliest and latest dynasties a great change had taken place. In the earliest sculptures, the dominant religion appears a simple Sabianism, a worship of the heavenly bodies, either as themselves the deities, or peculiarly indwelt by the deity. But this religion gives place to another, much more nearly resembling the Dual-worship of later times. It should seem, therefore, that we are to bring back that mysterious mythic religious founder, Zoroaster, from Bactria to the shores of the Tigris and Euphrates, and to consider this region as the birth-place of that fire-worship which assumed its most perfect form under the Persian kings: for of this Zoroastrian faith there appear in the later works many undoubted indications. But the great outward characteristic of the religion, as it appears on the monuments, is the worship of those singular composite animals, human-headed lions, &c., symbolic no doubt in their different parts of certain divine attributes. The sphinxes are evidently later, and of the Egyptian period. But this discussion, too, we are compelled to decline.

The most unexpected part of this discovery unquestionably has been that Assyria had, at the earliest period, a style of art of its own. We mean not of architecture: in that we should have expected all that is vast, spacious, colossal; even the fables, if they are altogether fables, of the buildings of Ninus and Semiramis would imply edifices which overawed neighboring nations, and left a perpetual tradition of their magnitude and grandeur. Assyrian architecture, like Babylonian, took, as is always the case, its character from the nature of the country and the material employed. All, as we have seen, was artificial; the mound on which stood the city, the walls, the palace. But the unlimited command of brick earth would allow the platform and the buildings to be spread out to any extent. They had not rocks to hew into temples. These, in Egypt and elsewhere, were the types and models of later edifices, when the builders had to draw the ponderous stone from quarries, either in the neighborhood or from some distance. The earth itself was the unfailing material; and its use, and the enormous extent to which it was hardened into walls, platforms, palaces, temples, hanging gardens, lived long in the poetry of the west, as in Ovid's allusion to the "muri coctiles" of Semiramis. Much earlier the prophet Nahum, when he menaces Nineveh with ruin, among other taunting sentences, utters this, "Draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strongholds; go into clay, and tread the mortar; make strong the brick-kiln;" (Nahum iii. 14.) The unmeasured extent of the cities so built, and their burying themselves, when overthrown, in their own rubbish, and becoming these shapeless

mounds, is exactly what we might expect; and with these wrecks, these mountains of brick rubble, travellers have long been familiar on the plains of Babylonia.

Nor are we much surprised to find that luxurious Nineveh already attired itself in the rich Babylonian garments—which for splendor of hues and fineness of woof were proverbial from the times of the earliest Hebrew writers to the most sumptuous days of Rome; nor that their furniture, vases, utensils, should exhibit graceful forms; that their chambers should be painted with borders of elegant design and brilliant coloring. But that they should have their own school of sculpture; that their palace or temple walls should be lined with reliefs, which show at least some very high artistic powers, was certainly, notwithstanding the precedent of the Egyptian battle-pieces and religious ceremonies, the last thing which we should have dreamed of finding in the edifices of ancient Assyria. Their sculpture, by every appearance, was indigenous, original, taken from Assyrian life, representing Assyrian form and costume: it does not Egyptianize till a comparatively late period. It is doubtless the parent of Persian art, as exhibited at Persepolis and elsewhere. But while we speak of its real artistic power, we are anxious to give no exaggerated estimate of its value as sculpture. It is well to prepare the visitors to the Ninevite Gallery at the Museum for what they must not expect, as for what they may. The secret of true majesty and true beauty was reserved for Greece; majesty, irrespective of magnitude—beauty, which ventured to reveal the whole form of man. The Assyrian is high art, but it is still barbaric art; not merely is it ignorant of perspective, often of proportion; it allows itself very strange devices to suggest its own meaning, the most whimsical accessories to tell its story. Its aim and object is historic and religious:—addressed to a people who still dwelt on symbolic forms, and were yet far from the exquisite anthropomorphism of Greece, it is not ideal, nor, in the higher sense, imaginative. The impressions which it sought to create, and which even now it does create, are awe at its boldness, size, strength, massiveness, gorgeousness. It is by gigantic dimensions that it intimates power; by a stern sedate-

ness of countenance and splendor of dress, kingly majesty. The lofty tiara adds to the solemn dignity of the human head; the draperies, hard in outline, mere layers of alabaster instead of folds, are worked into a kind of network of embroidery. It is at the same time singularly true, and absolutely untrue; it does not, on some of the reliefs, give more than two fore legs to a pair of horses in a chariot; there is no gradation in size; and yet there is a spirit and freedom in its outline, a force and energy in its forms, a skill in grouping, which ventures on some of the boldest attitudes into which the figure of the warrior can be thrown; it has that which is to sculpture what action, according to Demosthenes, was to oratory, *life*. It is, in its better period, perhaps more real in its animal than in its human forms; some horses' heads are extremely fine. It is orientally jealous of revealing the female form; women are seen on the battlements, tearing their hair, or carried away captive, but with none of that exposure which, whatever may be its effect as to decency, adds so much to the grace of sculpture. Those, then, who are content with spirit, animation, force, will regard these specimens of art, of such immemorial antiquity, not only with curiosity, but with admiration; those who will yield themselves up to the impressions produced by colossal forms, as suggesting great audacity of conception and of execution, will look with eagerness for the arrival of Mr. Layard's larger cargo: all who feel an interest in the history of art will be disposed to study with care and attention this new chapter in that book, unfolded so suddenly and so contrary to expectation.

We cannot close without once more congratulating Mr. Layard on his success as a writer, as well as a discoverer; we repeat, that taking this only as a book of travels, we have read none for a long time more entertaining and instructive. In his dissertations he is full and copious without being tedious; his style is plain, vigorous, and particularly unaffected; it is the natural language of a strong mind fully master of its subject, and warmed and enlivened, without being inflated and kindled into rhapsody by the enthusiasm, without which he would never have conceived or achieved his wonderful task.

The History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace. 1815-1845. Part V. Knight.

It would be premature to speak in any detail of a work such as the present, while yet only half completed, but what we have read of the numbers published has given us a high opinion of the probable value of the completed work. It was begun very ably by Mr. Charles Knight, who seems to have found it, however, after brief trial, incompatible with other studies and pursuits; and it has since been continued, with characteristic spirit and earnestness, by Miss Martineau.

We have had always the highest opinion of this writer's descriptive powers, and of the general soundness of her views; but we were not prepared for the quiet and composed tone of this history, the skill and justice of its individual characterization,

or the general ease and breadth of style and method with which it is executed throughout. We observe very few of the prejudices that might have been pardonable in one who has taken so active a part in the politics of her time. We see much patient and curious study of contemporary authorities, an excellent discrimination in the use of modern memoirs and letters, and a conscientious desire to get at the truth of motives as well as facts. Hence the impartial and reasonable spirit which is evinced in every part of the narrative, and which leads us to form so high an expectation of its worth as a completed book.

There are few things more difficult than to write contemporary history, but Miss Martineau has lightened her task by the simplicity and honesty of spirit with which she appears to have undertaken it.

EUROPE.

[THE long and important article on Nineveh, and the story by "Delta," Blackwood's old correspondent, exclude our usual variety. We are obliged to omit almost all that we had prepared of Foreign Politics. For the letter below we are indebted to the N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.]

London, February 23, 1849.

THE awakened glow of commercial prosperity, which I described in my last, has been steadily maintained, and, with the exception of grain, all articles of commerce have continued to meet with rising prices. Cotton last week advanced $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb., and although the ardor of buyers has during the past few days been somewhat moderated, animation is still universally observable. In what we call the colonial markets, that is to say, the markets for sugar, coffee, spices, &c., the depression which had prevailed ever since the breakdown of the great East India and Mauritius houses, seems at length to have been fairly overcome. Business with the continent also is returning in some degree to its old channels. From India, after two years of almost hopeless stagnation, we have had three or four successive mails with good advices. Bullion, too, continues to flow in, and the funds pursue their upward course. Consols, which at the last date were $92\frac{1}{2}$, have since been done at $94\frac{3}{4}$, and have closed to-day at $93\frac{1}{4}$. Railway shares, however, have scarcely participated to a proportionable extent in the general buoyancy. The distrust in their management has become chronic, and they now offer an illustration of the inevitable reaction of all popular impulses, no less impressive than that which is presented by the existing military despotisms of the continent, as compared with the license of this time twelve months. Two years back, abuse of every kind was heaped on those who doubted if it would be advantageous to carry our railway expenditure to three hundred millions sterling. Now, I believe, it would be impossible to raise a single pound for any new line, even if it were essential to the preservation of our whole commerce.

To-morrow is the anniversary of the deposition of Louis Philippe. Within a fortnight of that event it seemed as if the internal relations of all Europe would be changed, and every existing map rendered worthless. Yet after all the wreck, and dust, and terror, everything is almost as it was, except in so far as the latest lesson, that there is no sure foundation set in blood, which this result, or rather this absence of result, is calculated to teach, may have sunk into men's minds, to bring forth good hereafter.

The most curious feature of the retrospect suggested at the present moment is the reverse which has taken place in the anxiety for news between England and America. Last year you were indebted to us for your chief excitement, and now we have no news to send except as to the intense eagerness with which we await each arrival from your side. The California reports are to us what the European revolutions were to you. One set

of events threatened to alter all the relations of kingdoms, the other seems to threaten as much in regard to the relations of property. It will be curious if, twelve months hence, the reaction and disappointment in the one case should be equal to that in the other.

At present there is, on the whole, in this country, no disposition to underrate the marvels which reach us. It is argued, reasonably enough, that the fact of the perfect agreement which characterizes all the accounts that come from the gold region is a conclusive proof of their truth. Up to the present time we have not heard of a single person who has complained that upon setting to work he could not realize as much as he had anticipated, and if disappointments had occurred, it seems pretty certain that, with the readiness of human nature to catch at a grievance, the cry of discouragement would have been ten times as loud as any that had been raised of an opposite kind. We have already heard of dangers from robbers, of fever and ague, of high charges for food or drink, or aid of any kind, which went far to reduce the ultimate value of a day's earnings, but not a murmur as to the absolute fact of great earnings being universally practicable. It is also seen that, if the mines did not appear to be almost unlimited in extent and abundance, the workers would as far as possible suppress all tidings of them. On the contrary, each person seems to speak of them much in the same way as an Irishman, to whom land is gold, writes home to his relations about farms in Illinois.

Under these circumstances it is impossible for us at present not to take the sanguine side, and when in addition we contemplate the results that may attend the introduction of complete machinery for getting at the beds of the various streams, together with the immense number of people that are now certain to be upon the spot in the course of a few months, there is at all events enough to suggest the possibility that the supply, even if it be of short duration, may in the first instance prove enormous. Indeed, this seems likely to be the peculiar feature of the present course of events, as compared with what happened when the discovery of America took place. Effects which it then required 80 years to produce might now, supposing the new supply to be the same, be developed in less than as many months.

The immense extent of capital in this country, and the vast number of individuals interested in annuities and other descriptions of permanent property, will cause it to be understood that the whole question must excite a far deeper general feeling here than on your side. Look first at our 800 millions sterling of debt, which is all held at home; then at the immense amount of foreign loans that is distributed among us; then at the extra millions raised by railroads on shares, which are not to depend upon the profits, but are to bear a certain guaranteed rate of interest in perpetuity; then at the amount invested in what are called ground rents, almost every house in London as

well as in all our large towns being chargeable with a certain rent for the ground on which it stands, ranging in many cases from £10 up to £100 or more per annum; then at all the money invested in life annuities, purchased from assurance offices or from private individuals, and finally at all the minor transactions of a similar character, and it will be easy to form a conception of the multitudes who are now calculating, either in delight or dismay, the possible consequences that may be approaching.

As regards the popular feeling, of course, it is one of satisfaction. Numerous as the holders of annuities may be, the public, from whose pockets the proportion comprised in the interest on the national debt must come, are still more so. For this reason the discovery must prove of far greater value to England than to the United States, since the one grand thing that was wanting, and which neither natural philosophers, nor financiers, nor moralists, ever hoped to discover, was some means of lightening the terrible burden of her public liabilities.

In conclusion, there are one or two simple circumstances connected with our monetary arrangements which it may be useful to point out. The bank is obliged to issue notes, on a deposit of gold, to any extent. These notes are issued at the rate of £3 16s. 9d. for every ounce of gold. The bank can then take the gold to the mint, where it would be coined free of charge into money which would represent £3 17s. 10½d.—the additional three half-pence being considered the equivalent for the loss of interest sustained by the depositor of the gold at the mint, while he is waiting its return in the shape of coin. If the bank were not to issue notes for the gold brought to it, the holder could take it to the mint and get it coined at the rate of £3 17s. 10½d. for himself. As the notes issued by the bank, however, are only payable in gold, the bank comes under no responsibility in issuing them upon such deposits to any amount, since in fact such notes are merely a promise to return what has been lodged for them. The silver coinage of England is merely intended for convenience. Its intrinsic value is about ten per cent. below its nominal value—that is to say, if a person were to melt down one hundred sovereigns and two thousand shillings, he would find his lump of gold worth £100 and his lump of silver worth only £90. Hence the silver coins of England never become articles of commerce, and they are, moreover, not a legal tender for a larger sum than 40s. On the continent gold and silver are equally a legal tender, but silver is there the standard, because, having fallen in price since the coins of the respective metals were originally struck, of course all persons pay their debts in that which is the cheapest. The premium on gold in these countries is usually about five per cent. [In Austria, at present, owing to the hoarding consequent on political terror, it is much higher.] If, however, gold should be reduced

more than five per cent. in value, it would then be selected as the medium of payment. In this way the subsequent fall in gold would be retarded, and silver, from being thrown more or less out of use, would then take its share in the depreciation. This is a very important element in estimating the future effect of an enlarged supply of gold.

The question as to the necessity and feasibility of a ship canal across some part of central America—either Panama, Nicaragua, or Tehuantepec—is beginning to excite a real interest. A detailed summary of the three routes has been given in the *Times*, and the preference is awarded to Nicaragua. The amount of capital required would be extremely large, and unless America and England were to unite in the undertaking there would be little prospect at present of any actual operations. The position, however, in which we should be put, if you were to construct your talked-of railway from the Mississippi to San Francisco, is calculated to awaken serious considerations. Such a railway would furnish an outlet for all your produce, and would leave us to find our way, as of old, *via* Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope.

There are no means of ascertaining what is the amount of emigration going on from this country to California, but from such stray facts as come to my knowledge, I should imagine it to be by no means inconsiderable. It is asserted that the French government have decided on sending an engineer and staff to examine and report upon the mines.

In our House of Commons the only important proceedings since the last date have been the introduction of a bill to do away with the present privilege of Parliament, which exempts members from liability to arrest for debt, and “for the exclusion of insolvent members;” the renewal of the discussion on the navigation laws; and the introduction of a bill for a form of oath which would enable Jews to sit in the House of Commons. None of these measures, however, have as yet advanced beyond their preliminary stages.

As regards Ireland the pressure of the poor law upon the landlords is the grand theme of complaint. The distress is in all cases local, so that while some parishes protest their utter inability to maintain their poor, there are others where society is in a better condition, and the rates are consequently light. To meet the outcry on the part of the destitute parishes, the government have proposed that when the rates of any given electoral division shall exceed 5s. in the pound on the rental, the surplus shall be collected from the union at large, excepting that contributions from the union shall not exceed 2s. in the pound, it being provided that all beyond 7s. must be raised by a rate on Ireland generally. This measure encounters tremendous opposition, on the plea that the well regulated parts of the country will thus have to pay for the improvidence of the other parts.

By this morning's mail it appears that the jury on the trial of Mr. Gavan Duffy have not been able to come to an agreement, and that the prosecution

has therefore fallen through. He is, however, to be again put on his trial, for the publication of other articles.

On the continent matters remain without any great change. In France, the people, forgetting their recent mission of European liberation, are all mad with delight at the balls and parties of Louis Napoleon, and are without eyes or ears for anything but the smallest gossip of his sayings and doings. That the farce will shortly be ended by his being elected emperor, either unequivocally or disguisedly as president for life, seems to be the general opinion. From Austria sickening accounts of the reign of terror established by the emperor and his army still come thick upon us, while with respect to Hungary, where excesses of the most frightful character continue to take place, nothing more is known of a decisive kind than had reached us a fortnight back. France, by whom all the movements were originated that have led to these severities, has now no word of succor or protest on behalf of the sufferers. In Italy revolutionary changes are yet going on with some rapidity. The Duke of Modena has fled from his dominions, and the Duke of Tuscany, a really liberal man, who was one of the first supporters of Pius the ninth in his popular movement, has followed the fatal example, from the dread, it is believed, which was inspired in his mind of yielding any further to the democratic tendencies of the time, and thus incurring the excommunication recently promulgated by the pope from Gaeta.

In Rome the temporal power of the pope has been declared at an end, and here as in Tuscany a provisional government has been established. Both in Rome and Tuscany these movements were preceded by a determination to promote the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, to decide the basis of an Italian union, but in Sardinia, although the liberal ministry still hold power, a wiser or more practicable course has been pursued and this step has met with no encouragement. Meanwhile the despotic powers, Naples, Austria, and Russia, are burning to pour in troops and to subjugate these disturbers. In the Sicilian question there is no new feature.

From the Times of Feb. 23d.

AMERICAN HONOR.

THE most interesting question connected with the present prosperity of the United States is, what effect will it have in causing a return to honor on the part of the defaulting communities of Mississippi, Florida, Arkansas, and Michigan. It is now more than ten years since the creditors of these states found themselves embarrassed or ruined by their misplaced confidence. In the crash which occasioned the default, five other states also suspended. Three of these have since resumed, and, for the most part, in a manner to leave them free from stain; the fourth has made a compromise, which, although not very

creditable in itself, will now be faithfully adhered to; and the fifth (Illinois) gives ground for forbearance and hope by paying a portion of what is due from her, and by not denying her liability for the remainder. The indication afforded by this gradual progress is unmistakable. It was the sound feeling of the majority of the American people comprised in the non-defaulting states, which irresistibly impelled the defaulters to make these efforts to regain their standing in the Union, and with every instance of a return to good faith, the force of public opinion must have become still more severe in its operation on those that remain. When nine states, with an aggregate debt of \$114,000,000, were banded together, they formed a phalanx sufficiently powerful to comfort one another, and to resist for a time the example of the majority of the confederation. Now that the number is reduced to four, with a debt of not more than \$30,000,000, they occupy a very different position. The number of states in the Union is twenty-eight, with a total population of 22,000,000. Of this population, the proportion of the four repudiating states reaches only 800,000. It is not difficult to see that, surrounded by such a majority who are compromised by partnership with them, they must speedily become honest in self-defence.

But it is not on this ground that the best hopes of the creditors depend. There are abundant signs that, in the ten years which have elapsed, a very decided change has occurred amongst the people even in the defaulting states. It is scarcely too much to believe that if the question of repudiation were now put for the first time, not a dozen individuals would be found to assent to it, or beyond this, that if each man by quietly contributing his quota henceforth could place the matter as if nothing had ever happened, there would be no further trouble of any kind. The difficulty is to get any one to agitate afresh so disagreeable a subject. Claims that have been dishonored for one third of a generation may well be left for another week, month, or year, and so the affair goes on. A single bold politician in each instance might not only carry the point, but gain an enduring fame.

Under these circumstances, it is plainly the policy of the creditors to commence an active movement, and to ascertain distinctly from the executive of the several defaulting states the ground they are disposed to take. If the result of these applications should prove unfavorable, they should then lose no time in drawing forth by petitions, and by every other available method, the advocacy of the most upright and energetic amongst those in each community who are capable of giving a direction to popular feeling. All the South American republics are now seeking to make arrangements with their creditors, and it would be disagreeable to find that if Spain does not soon stand alone in degradation, it will be because she can point to examples amongst some of the most flourishing governments of the Anglo-Saxon race.

[We have prepared and postponed many pages upon Ireland; but make room for the summing up by the *Times*, in order to call the attention of our readers to the fact, that the question which no British ministry has been able to solve—the *question of Ireland*—is about to be transferred to us.]

THE EMIGRATION FROM IRELAND.—It is a growing expectation in Ireland that we are now about to witness one of the most momentous operations of society—the removal of a people *en masse* to a distant shore. The half million who have got off with no very great stir, in the course of two years, are but an advance guard to the main body that follows. It must, indeed, be the most furious impulse or the direst necessity that can urge men at this season of the year to cast themselves on the deep, to brave the wide Atlantic, to be thrown on they know not what headland or shoal, in the storms and the fogs which beset the wished-for shore, and, at the best, to land in a country still ribbed with ice and buried in snow. Yet we were told the other day of ten emigrant vessels taking refuge in the Cove of Cork, of crowds waiting at other ports for the chance of a passage, and of multitudes ejected from their holdings, and now lodging in towns, with no other hope upon earth than once to put their feet on the shore of the new world. We believe it to be even as it is described. The failure of the staple crop, the burden of maintaining the victims of famine, the impossibility of paying rates upon small holdings, and the invincible objection to pay them upon holdings of any size, constitute an expellent force of which the like was never seen. Pauperism, in all its bearings, is depopulating the island. They who are paupers, they who expect to be paupers, and they who loathe the thought of contributing their hard earnings to be squandered upon paupers, are equally out of heart, and resolved to go elsewhere. When the mind is resolved, the means only are wanting. But among the many redeeming virtues of this intractable and unfortunate race, is a strength of family affection, which no distance, no time, no pressure, no prosperity can destroy; and every one of the half million who have safely effected their retreat consecrates his first earnings to the pious work of rescuing a parent, a brother or a sister from Ireland.

NEW BOOKS AND REPRINTS.

Poems by James T. Fields. An elegant volume of a hundred pages with this title has been published by William D. Ticknor & Co. The poem recently delivered by Mr. Fields before the Mercantile Library Association of this city is here included entire, and there are many pieces of a high order of merit now for the first time published. The book deserves a closer examination than we can give it to-day; but we cannot forbear quoting the following exquisite ballad, as a fair specimen of its quality:

We were crowded in the cabin,
Not a soul would dare to sleep,
It was midnight on the waters,
And a storm was on the deep.

'Tis a fearful thing in winter
To be shattered in the blast,
And to hear the rattling trumpet
Thunder, "Cut away the mast!"

So, we shuddered there in silence,
For the stoutest held his breath,
While the hungry sea was roaring,
And the breakers talked with Death.

As thus we sat in darkness,
Each one busy in his prayers,
"We are lost!" the captain shouted,
As he staggered down the stairs.

But his little daughter whispered,
As she took his icy hand,
"Is n't God upon the ocean,
Just the same as on the land?"

Then we kissed the little maiden,
And we spoke in better cheer,
And we anchored safe in harbor
When the morn was shining clear.

Transcript.

From the fruitful press of Messrs. Harper we have—

The Caxtons: a Family Picture. By Sir E. B. Lytton.

Franklin Illustrated. Part 5.

The Midnight Sun: a Pilgrimage. By Fredrika Bremer. Translated from the unpublished original by Mary Howitt.

History of Queen Elizabeth. By Jacob Abbott. With Engravings.

Elementary Treatise on Mechanics. By Prof. A. W. Smith.

This is an important work on the science of mechanics, founded on the analytic method of investigation; a mode which affords scope for the exercise of the judgment and the inventive powers more equably by far than the geometrical methods. The mature experience of the learned author has led him to adopt this mode in his professional teaching, and we think it probable that this work will promote its very general adoption.—*N. Y. Com. Adv.*

A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston, perpetrated in the evening of the fifth day of March, 1770, by soldiers of the 29th Regiment, which with the 14th Regiment were then quartered there; with some observations on the state of things prior to that catastrophe. Printed by order of the Town of Boston, 1770: and now republished by John Doggett, Jr., New York, and Redding & Co., Boston, with notes and illustrations. Price 50 cents.

Here is a handsome bound volume, with a map of Boston and a frontispiece showing the citizens with their cocked hats, falling under the fire of the soldiery. How the sound of those guns has gone into all lands in 79 years!

Many are now living who were then upon the earth. The vastness of the changes during the life of a man, overpowers thought! Will those of the next 79 years be greater? All movement is now accelerated with tenfold velocity, but we can hardly conceive, unless the *Second Coming* be near, of so great a change as has converted a few discontented colonies into an empire which now acknowledges no superior, and which needs but a few more years to be the greatest in the world!

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SHORT ARTICLES.—Songs, Madrigals and Sonnets; Count D'Orsay's Picture of our Saviour, 17.—History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace, 43.—New Books and Reprints, 47.

PROSPECTUS.—This work is conducted in the spirit of Littell's Museum of Foreign Literature, (which was favorably received by the public for twenty years,) but as it is twice as large, and appears so often, we not only give spirit and freshness to it by many things which were excluded by a month's delay, but while thus extending our scope and gathering a greater and more attractive variety, are able so to increase the solid and substantial part of our literary, historical, and political harvest, as fully to satisfy the wants of the American reader.

The elaborate and stately Essays of the *Edinburgh Quarterly*, and other Reviews; and *Blackwood's* noble criticisms on Poetry, his keen political Commentaries, highly wrought Tales, and vivid descriptions of rural and mountain Scenery; and the contributions to Literature, History, and Common Life, by the sagacious *Spectator*, the sparkling *Examiner*, the judicious *Athenæum*, the busy and industrious *Literary Gazette*, the sensible and comprehensive *Britannia*, the sober and respectable *Christian Observer*; these are intermixed with the Military and Naval reminiscences of the *United Service*, and with the best articles of the *Dublin University*, *New Monthly*, *Fraser's*, *Tait's*, *Ainsworth's*, *Hood's*, and *Sporting Magazines*, and of *Chambers' admirable Journal*. We do not consider it beneath our dignity to borrow wit and wisdom from *Punch*; and, when we think it good enough, make use of the thunder of *The Times*. We shall increase our variety by importations from the continent of Europe, and from the new growth of the British colonies.

The steamship has brought Europe, Asia, and Africa, into our neighborhood; and will greatly multiply our connections, as Merchants, Travellers, and Politicians, with all parts of the world; so that much more than ever it

now becomes every intelligent American to be informed of the condition and changes of foreign countries. And this not only because of their nearer connection with ourselves, but because the nations seem to be hastening through a rapid process of change, to some new state of things, which the merely political prophet cannot compute or foresee.

Geographical Discoveries, the progress of Colonization, (which is extending over the whole world,) and Voyages and Travels, will be favorite matter for our selections; and, in general, we shall systematically and very fully acquaint our readers with the great department of Foreign affairs, without entirely neglecting our own.

While we aspire to make the *Living Age* desirable to all who wish to keep themselves informed of the rapid progress of the movement—to Statesmen, Divines, Lawyers, and Physicians—to men of business and men of leisure—it is still a stronger object to make it attractive and useful to their Wives and Children. We believe that we can thus do some good in our day and generation; and hope to make the work indispensable in every well-informed family. We say *indispensable*, because in this day of cheap literature it is not possible to guard against the influx of what is bad in taste and vicious in morals, in any other way than by furnishing a sufficient supply of a healthy character. The mental and moral appetite must be gratified.

We hope that, by "*winnowing the wheat from the chaff*," by providing abundantly for the imagination, and by a large collection of Biography, Voyages and Travels, History, and more solid matter, we may produce a work which shall be popular, while at the same time it will aspire to raise the standard of public taste.